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HOW DO DISCOURSES ENABLE AND CONSTRAIN THE POWER OF  
DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS IN INTERACTIONS WITHIN THE  
WOMEN'S CIRCLE?

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*A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of  
the degree of Master of Sociology  
Course code: SOC5032W*

Faculty of the Humanities  
University of Cape Town  
2012

**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree.  
It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the  
work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor Johann Graaff, for his guidance efficiency and seemingly endless capacity to listen.

I extend my deep gratitude to all the people that I came into contact with during my time with The Women's Circle, but particularly the four practitioners that took part in interviews for their time and trust.

Thanks to Barbara Schmid at the UCT Knowledge Co-op for facilitating my work with The Women's Circle and her unconditional support throughout my studies.

I am indebted to my partner and unpaid editor Andrew Robinson, for his attention to detail, honest feedback and infinite capacity to repeatedly proof read my work. This is the only page I didn't ask you to help me with!

Thanks to the Humanities Faculty at the University of Cape Town for my bursary, which made a significant difference to my ability to continue studying.

Lastly I would like to acknowledge all my past and present friends, teachers, students, colleagues and family members that have contributed in various ways to my eternal enthusiasm for Sociology.

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the work of development practitioners trained in REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) in a small NPO in Cape Town. Through examining interactions the study investigates what discourses are at work and how they position practitioners. My argument is that multiple discourses at work in development settings, tend to constrain rather than enable the agency of individuals. These constraints lead to the unintended consequence of further entrenching dominant development discourses that practitioners may or not be aware of.

Giddens' structuration theory and concept of duality of structure is used to house additional notions of power, which include Foucault's panoptic power and Gramsci's hegemonic power. This framework is interpreted through a critical feminist lens with which to understand development work undertaken by South African women. Feminist principles are additionally used to compose a qualitative research design aiming to encourage practitioners to question how they think about development. Overt participant observation was used in meetings and workshops, where interactions were recorded in the form of written field notes. After six months with the organisation, semi structured interviews were conducted with four practitioners that were recorded and transcribed. Both field notes and transcriptions were interpreted using critical discourse analysis. Themes were identified around the choice of language used and what ideologies informed patterns of interaction. By comparing literature on learning and development with empirical data, several discourses were identified.

First, a development discourse that placed emphasis on specific terminology. This positioned practitioners in a hierarchy depending on their level of fluency in development terminology. Second, a practitioner control discourse set the norms of interactions in meetings, allocating practitioners distinct roles. Third, Western feminist discourses became reified where practitioners saw development purely in economic terms, largely focussing on a homogenous group of women. These discourses combined to foster conformity, rather than dismantling or challenging the status quo. The implication is that theoretically radical development strategies may ultimately breed acceptance, silencing individuals that do not espouse the merits of Freirean development ideology.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Introduction

In this section I give some background about The Women's Circle, a non-profit organisation (NPO) of development workers operating in Cape Town, South Africa. I explain what is meant by 'REFLECT' and how it shapes the ethos and pedagogy of The Women's Circle and their affiliated funding organisations. I summarise the origins of REFLECT theory of adult education which combines the philosophies of Paulo Freire (1970) and Robert Chambers (1994). I conclude with a brief explanation of the purpose and rationale behind this study.

## Background

My interest in development came about while taking a course titled 'Development Sociology in Practice.' From weekly readings I became familiar with development perspectives, so that when I started working at The Women's Circle, I was comparing theory and practice.

## The Women's Circle

The Women's Circle (TWC hereafter) is based in Cape Town<sup>1</sup> and funded by the South African REFLECT Network (SARN). Development practitioners travel to Delft, Cape Town to facilitate workshops. During my time with TWC they offered health and human rights workshops, craft workshops, and were planning to start a youth focal group. According to the funders website (SARN, 2010) the aims of TWC are:

'...to develop coordinated programmes of action aimed at increasing the ability of women to participate effectively in society by building on the vision enshrined in the constitution; and creating an enabling environment within which women can empower themselves, and their communities. The support of women, for women, by women has a central role to play in alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development. TWC has been using the *REFLECT* approach since 2007, and came on board as a SARN grant supported partner in 2010.'

(SARN, 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> I have not included the exact location to protect the anonymity of research participants.

The above definition states that TWC is an organisation run by women for women. This is partly true as, although anyone is welcome to attend the workshops, the practitioners are women, the vast majority of participants at workshops are women and when workshops are planned, reference is most frequently made to helping 'the women' (Field notes, line 12)<sup>2</sup>. As such their work sits within a Women in Development approach (WID hereafter). In contrast my radical feminist agenda and desire to disrupt dominant discourses is more consistent with a Gender and Development (GAD) approach (elaborated on in chapter 2).

SARN dictates the development pedagogy used to structure workshops that TWC facilitate. If TWC choose to use a model other than 'REFLECT' (SARN, 2010) then practitioners know that they risk having funding withdrawn. Thus TWC practitioners' power to choose a development strategy is materially constrained (Giddens, 1991) unless they can find alternative sources of funding.

### **South African REFLECT Network (SARN)**

SARN are funded by the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband, 2012) known as DVV. They support SARN that describes itself as:

'A network of participants, practitioners, organisations and adult and development activists across South Africa who are either using REFLECT or advocate for using REFLECT as an accepted and preferred means to contribute to the realisation of the rights of the poor. These organisations and the various REFLECT practitioners are supporting community beneficiaries in both rural communities and poor and disadvantaged urban areas. 80% of beneficiaries are women. The implementation of REFLECT has been well monitored and documented across all of these organisations with significant success.'

(SARN, 2010).

SARN's emphasis on REFLECT is significant to the question of development practitioners' power. Their interactions are enabled and constrained by REFLECT

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<sup>2</sup> Field notes refer to notes in my field note journal that have not been included in their entirety to protect anonymity. I have instead included extracts from field notes that are cited as in the Appendices. My full field note journal is available on request.

theory and language taught by SARN in free training programmes. During my time with TWC, the women attended three REFLECT refresher residential workshops that varied from two to three days in duration.

## **REFLECT**

‘REFLECT is an innovative approach to adult learning and social change that fuses the theories of Paulo Freire with participatory methodologies developed for Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)...Therefore: Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT)’.

(SARN, 2010)

The SARN website uses the terms ‘sustainable development’, ‘alleviating poverty’ ‘the poor’ and ‘community beneficiaries’ without elaborating on precisely what they understand these words to mean, which is a common criticism of development agencies (Cornwall, 2010). When applied universally to women these terms can be viewed as lacking attention to intersections of race, language and sexuality (Collins, 2000) that remain significant in ‘mixed’ neighbourhoods in the ‘new’ South Africa (Seekings, Jooste, Muyeba, Coqui & Russel, 2010).

Skimming over nuances has implications for women’s agency, where ‘the poor’ are stereotyped. Solutions are communicated by SARN with an air of certainty, to be found in ‘plans of action that will improve their living conditions’ (SARN, 2010). From a radical feminist stance, my research is concerned with the role of language as a vehicle for transmitting and entrenching ideas, ideologies and discourses that saturate REFLECT and in turn practitioners’ work. I now turn to Freirean literature in order to better understand the theoretical underpinnings of REFLECT, which together with Participatory Rural Appraisal (Chambers, 1994) forms a hybrid approach to development through adult education, that is utilised by TWC.

## **Paulo Freire**

Adopting a critical Marxist approach to education, Freire sets out a theory of change where ‘only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both’ (Freire, 1970, p. 23). For him, it is not enough for both sides of the power divide to have a heightened level of consciousness of exploitative power relationships for exploitation to be overcome. Instead, ‘pedagogy must be forged with,

not for the oppressed...this pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for liberation' (Freire, 1970, p. 33). Out of this, any strategy to educate or develop individuals or groups has to rely on the oppressor ceasing to regard those with less power 'as an abstract category' (Freire, 1970, p. 32). These points are pertinent for several reasons.

Firstly, one may expect that, given Freire's attitude to power, TWC practitioners relinquish control to unite with each other and those that they seek to empower through development workshops. Secondly, it provides a theory of development pedagogy to compare with the realities of power structures for TWC practitioners. Freire's approach to power should theoretically mean that the power of practitioners is to some degree surrendered in order to unite with participants in development workshops. In practice I did not always find this to be the case.

Freire's theory of education provides a model by which to contextualise the work of TWC practitioners. The extent to which TWC practitioners draw on Freire's thinking and consequent enablement or constraint on their attempts to empower others, is an important consideration. Individuals may have a different understanding or interpretation depending on their personal politics, values and how many SARN training sessions practitioners have been on. These differentials in knowledge may be indicated through language and conduct in different spaces and interactions. Language in turn becomes a site of resistance or compliance to Freirean theory imposed by SARN. Accordingly, the theories of development create a discourse, where the work of language conveys more than the meaning of the words spoken (elaborated on in chapter 2 and 3).

When I first spoke to the programme manager of TWC, she explained what REFLECT was and stressed that TWC's work was not about giving to people but giving them the things that they need so that they can look to the future (Field notes, line 10). As I spent more time with TWC practitioners, it looked to me that not all the practitioners had the same understanding of power, and its place in the interactions that they had with workshop participants and each other. The focus of this study is not an evaluation of REFLECT methodology or the effectiveness of TWC workshops, but rather the

question: **How do discourses enable and constrain the power of development practitioners in interactions within The Women's Circle?**

Language and terminology is placed at the centre of REFLECT, where 'the teacher becomes facilitator' and learners become participants 'at the centre of their own learning process, setting their own agenda' (SARN, 2010). In theory, an awareness of 'power dynamics and relationships' (SARN 2010) is at the heart of TWC practitioners' training, but I became interested in uncovering how things played out in practice and what role terminology played in reality. This was particularly in light of literature criticising development initiatives claiming to be sensitive to power at local levels (Mohan & Stokke, 2000).

### **Purpose and rationale of the study**

Much research into development focuses on the evaluation of the success or failure of development interventions (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). As such, attention has to some degree been drawn away from political and power dynamics between practitioners engaging with Participatory Rural Appraisal (Chambers, 1994) as a means of effecting change. There is a paucity of evidence in the form of individual experiences of practitioners who are 'at the front line' of development (Jackson, 1997), with regard to power (Hughes, Wheeler & Eyben, 2005). This is despite the wealth of theoretical discourse on power in development (Kapoor, 2004; Graves, 2002). If the goals of development projects are ultimately to improve people's lives, including those of practitioners themselves (Kaplan, 2002), it is surely important to understand the power relations at play.

The study of power positions in interactions of development practitioners is important because it has consequences for how long a development project lasts, and if it shrinks or grows. Secondly, it affects how the project is received by the people it aims to help. Thirdly, it has ramifications for the reflexivity of development practitioners. Lastly it has consequences for how development projects are judged by external agencies such as potential future funders.

The results of this study could help development organisations/donors better understand how discourses enable and constrain workers. It could shed light on what it is like to be on the 'front lines' of development and provide information to assist the

planning of development projects, so that organisations take into account power dynamics at grass root level. For TWC practitioners, it could alter the way they understand power and the way they implement Feirean principles. In addition the study could be a tribute to the work of development practitioners and how they negotiate power relations. Finally the study may confront stereotypes of the beneficiaries of development initiatives and challenge perceptions of Western<sup>3</sup> feminist approaches to researching women in the global south (see chapter 2).

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<sup>3</sup> I refer to 'Western,' 'the West,' 'Third World,' and 'global south' although I acknowledge that these terms are value laden (Hall, 2007).

## Chapter 2 Literature review

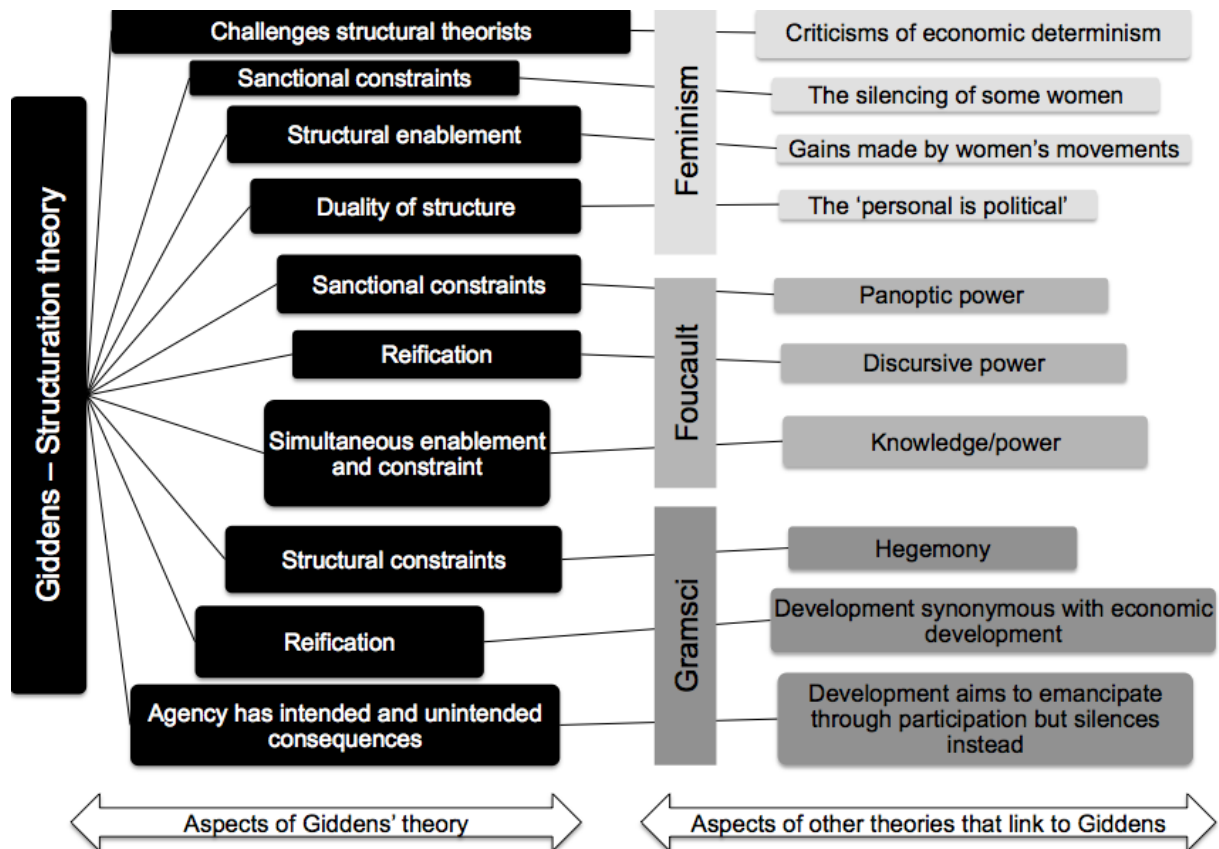
### Introduction

In this section I begin by explaining the theories of power that I draw on in this study. The broad angle I take uses Giddens' theory of structuration, providing a foundation for the study that bridges structural and interpretivist sociological theory. I use the concept of agency to provide a notion of power that recognises how individuals and society co-constitute one another, as part of Giddens' duality of structure.

Having established the broad themes of Giddens' structuration theory, I move on to look at enablement and constraint. In acknowledging the capacity of individuals to change and be changed by rules and resources of society, Giddens asserts that 'one person's constraint is another person's enablement' (Giddens, 1984, p. 176). I further refine individual capacity by homing in on two types of enablement and constraint, through an explanation of 'sanctions' and 'structure' as conceptualised by Giddens.

Having set out Giddens' theory, I elaborate on parts where I see overlaps with aspects of radical feminist, Foucauldian and Gramscian perspectives. To illustrate each point, I draw on development literature and link it to this study. The diagram below (Figure 1) aims to summarise these connections. On the left and shaded black are the strands of Giddens' theory that I focus on. I then connect these to corresponding parts of other theories that I have broadly grouped in to the three categories of Feminism, Foucault and Gramsci. On the right highlighted in grey, are examples of elements of these theories that have a connection with strands of Giddens on the left.

**Figure 1. Diagram to illustrate a summary of my overall theoretical framework**



## Theories of power

### Giddens' theory of power: structuration theory and duality of structure

Giddens' theory of structuration provides a useful platform upon which to build a theoretical framework, directly tackling concepts of power, enablement and constraint. These terms form part of my research question with a view to considering when and how different types of power happen, and the resultant capacity or lack of capacity of individuals in interactions. There are also links with other theories of power that lend themselves to this critical study, namely radical feminist theories of power where they intersect with development, Foucault's theories of power and discourse and lastly Gramsci's theory of hegemonic power. I aim to weave these into Giddens' theories to provide a lens through which to view interactions that combine structural and interpretivist Sociological perspectives.

Giddens' theory of structuration centres around the concept of 'duality of structure... structuration theory attempts to show how social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution'



(Bryant & Jary, 1991, p. 7). This means that the study of human behaviour cannot be solely viewed at the macro level. While Marxist theories could have been used to examine the power of development practitioners, for me this would have put too much emphasis on their position as part of the working classes, which could mask the differences between the four women and downplay the possibility for them to be individually responsible for change.

With his notion of the duality of structure, Giddens overcomes the limitations of Marxist theory, which marginalises the role of individuals and places emphasis on economic factors in the 'creation and continuity of new political forms' (Bryant & Jary, 1991, p. 126). In addition, and most relevant to this study, is Giddens' assertion that 'structures' do not only place constraints on individual capacity to effect change, but simultaneously enable the process. Structures in Giddens' theory are the rules and resources in society. Rules can be likened to formulae or laws that provide individuals with a 'generalised capacity to respond to and influence circumstances' (Giddens, 1984, p. 22) that they encounter. According to Giddens, individuals' understanding of and adherence to rules are mostly tacitly understood and sanctioned informally. This means enablement and constraint can happen simultaneously in interactions, which may occur with or without an actor's recognition.

Giddens uses the example of language to illustrate how enablement and constraint can be simultaneous. Language is constrained by rules of grammar that limit how people can communicate. Simultaneously grammatical rules enable communication, so that individuals are understood and can effectively convey thoughts, in a way which others can make sense of. In doing so existing language conventions are reproduced and transformed. Within this process human actors are 'competent agents' where 'power is never merely a constraint but the origin of capabilities to bring about intended outcomes of action' (Giddens, 1984, p173). This theory of the capacity of individuals makes it possible for me to adopt a critical stance, while retaining the possibility of positive outcomes for development practitioners in their work.

A prominent feature of Giddens' theory of structuration, beyond a notion of power as an ability to bring about change, is that although humans have knowledge about their actions, these actions may result in intended or unintended consequences. 'History is

created by intentional activities but is not an intended project (Giddens, 1984, p. 27)' which makes the work of development practitioners more complex than one may at first think. Thus an intention to help others may not actually result in helping at all, or could even make things worse. This inability to be able to direct the outcome of actions may help to explain why participatory or emancipatory development initiatives sometimes fail to guarantee the inclusion or emancipation of its intended recipients. However, the unintended outcomes of actions are not necessarily negative, and Giddens repeatedly reminds readers that structure is always both a source of enablement and constraint (Giddens, 1984, p. 169).

In summary, Giddens puts forward a theory of power which acknowledges that:

- Individuals have the power to transform structures, and structures change the rules and resources of individuals.
- Transformative capacity can simultaneously be a source of enablement and constraint, as with the rules of grammar that restrict but simultaneously make effective communication possible.
- The actions of individuals can result in intended and unintended consequences that may be beyond the control of the individual despite their desired goals.

This study draws on a theory that acknowledges the potential for TWC practitioners to bring about change that extends beyond their individual circumstances, and that this power can enable or constrain. Although practitioners want to help people, they may unintentionally cause harm in some way despite their best efforts. I will now take a closer look at enablement and constraint as elaborated on by Giddens.

### **Different types of enablement and constraint**

Giddens identifies three forms of constraint; material, sanctions and structural (Giddens, 1984, p. 175), though it's important to remember that each can enable, as they allow possibilities as well as restrictions in various ways. I will explain each of these briefly before going on to tie them to other theories of power.

Firstly, material constraints are things such as the physical capacity of humans or the physical environment. Power via material constraint may restrict the time or space available to a person but equally can propel someone into action, enabling an individual to become motivated to get things done (Giddens, 1984, p. 175). This is

relevant to the study of development practitioners as material constraints often prompt development initiatives. While material things such as money and venues are relevant, I have chosen to focus on the other two types of constraint that have more to say about power for my particular research question.

Secondly, sanctions (forms of social control) placed on individuals may constrain groups. Rules in modern society can be understood in terms of laws. These are sanctioned by overt formal punishments that vary in severity. More covert sanctions operate in the 'structuring of daily interaction which are much more fixed and constraining than might appear from the ease by which they are followed' (Giddens, 1984, p. 23). The power to bring about change may be constrained by informally applied sanctions that only make themselves apparent when normative patterns of behaviour are challenged. In development, failure to communicate using development 'jargon' (Eade, 2010) may not be overtly punished but treated as deviant. This non-conformity to established rules of interaction disturbs 'the sense of ontological security of the "subjects" by undermining the intelligibility of discourse' (Giddens, 1984, p. 23).

Thirdly, structural constraints are those where the properties of the social system limit the number of options available to a social actor. Social systems are the situated activities of human agents reproduced across time and space (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Actors have their own theories about these social systems and this knowledge is integral to the 'persistent patterning of social life' (Giddens, 1984, p. 26). For example, the practice of facilitating a workshop is an action that is reproduced through development discourses that normalise this as a method to help people. Alternatively, an involvement in development work could be rationalised through religion as a moral obligation. Whichever ideology is used, the action becomes seen as natural, which Giddens refers to as part of reification (Giddens, 1984, p. 26).

Structural theorists, such as Durkheim, justified the investigation and measurement of 'social facts' through pursuit of discoverable external laws governing human behaviour. They are external in that individuals are not aware of them. Giddens' counter argument is that 'human agents always know what they are doing on the level of discursive consciousness under some description' (Giddens, 1984, p. 26). Individuals are never totally subject to the laws that govern human behaviour, and

these laws are never entirely outside of individual consciousness. 'However, what they do may be unfamiliar under other descriptions and they may know little of the ramified consequences of activities in which they engage' (Giddens, 1984, p. 26). So on some level, people always have an understanding of what they are doing, though this knowledge may be incomplete. Although individuals can influence forces of structure and systems, people may lack the capacity to control exactly how this comes about and what the end results are, which acts as a constraint on individual agency.

For development practitioners, external structural constraints of which they have little knowledge may constrain their power to transform the communities that they work in. These constraints may be in the form of rules that they are not aware of, which means that they account for their actions via other sources of knowledge. If practitioners never come to know these rules then they operate outside of human consciousness. Certain forms of action or social systems are reproduced through reification, where particular ways of justifying patterns of interaction come to be seen as natural. In either instance, whether actors are aware or unaware of alternative patterns of behaviour, discourses are positioning them in ways that result in intended or unintended consequences.

In summary, sanctional constraints are those that ensure the following of societal norms through mechanisms such as observation of human behaviour, and the threat of punishment or repercussions if actions are judged to be non-conformist. Structural constraints are the ways that wider forces of society operate to regulate behaviour through the domination of one group over another. I now take parts of Giddens' theory outlined so far, and mesh them together with aspects of three other sociological perspectives, to add depth to my theoretical framework.

### **Giddens and feminist criticisms of structural theorists**

Like Giddens, feminist researchers challenge the tendency towards economic determinism and functionalist consensus approaches to the study of society. This challenge is mounted through recognising family, work and other social structures as 'gendered sites of change, conflict and contestation, not to mention power relations' (Imam, 1997, p. 8). In the development sector, this shift in thought happened as a result of the influence of feminist criticisms of development interventions and their

analysis. I come on to this later in this chapter when mentioning Women in Development (WID) initiatives.

### **Duality of structure and feminism**

Giddens uses the women's movement as an example of a social movement in explaining his concept of life-politics. In addressing questions of self-identity, the women's movement and TWC aspire to raise women's aspirations in what is commonly framed in development speak as 'empowerment.' The notion that there may be more for women beyond the home is expressed by founders of feminism such as Betty Friedan (to use Giddens' example). This has only come about because women can 'envisage circumstances in which, because of the changes which ensue from achieving it, emancipation directly affects life-political issues' (Giddens, 1991, p. 230).

This form of women's agency links to structural enablement and constraint. Where historically rules and resources favoured male domination, women's actions and attitudes have gradually altered, which in turn has given women more authority in their interactions with men. Over space and time the change in attitudes of women has resulted in the amendment of structural constraints. Individual women may or may not have intended for their actions in personal relationships to have any impact beyond their lives, but the consequence was to gradually change the 'mechanisms of integration' (Giddens, 1984, p. 24). So generations of women after Friedan adhered to slightly different societal rules, with a greater capacity to respond and influence circumstances involving men. This led to breaking down of stereotypical segregated conjugal roles and the division of labour between men and women. This has a bearing on the current roles of women either working in development or targeted as development recipients. I consider this in more depth later in the chapter with reference to neo-Marxism.

Giddens' reference to the phrase 'the personal is political' overlaps with second wave feminist mantras calling on women to understand the wider importance of language and action beyond their individual lives. This provides an illustration of duality of structure within a theory of structuration, where individual action can transform wider societal structures and vice versa. However 'the personal is political' slogan conforms to a Western liberal feminist agenda. Radical feminists criticise liberal feminists for their over reliance on legislation and reform (Heywood, 2003, p. 261), merely

transposing their values on a non-Western context, rather than challenging deep-seated patriarchal structures. For example, tackling female genital mutilation in parts of West Africa by lobbying for amendments to the law could be interpreted as a futile Eurocentric position. In this project I am to 'debunk' (Mills, 1959 cited in Graaff, 2001, p. 7) assumptions about the superiority of the West and white Western feminists that have been historically implied in power relations between academic and non-academic fields.

### **Sanctions and violence against women**

Giddens' reference to sanctional constraints through threatening behaviour is a useful way to view the historical dominance of men over women in Cape Town. An awareness of this constraint helps towards an understanding of the context in which TWC practitioners operate. It could be argued that there is a culture within South Africa of hegemonic masculinities (Ramphela, 2008), stemming from Apartheid governance and traditional laws. These ideas and values are more dominant in rural areas, but still have a significant presence in the more urban settings in which practitioners work, such as Delft. This means that in the current context, although women's class, race, religion, age and geographical location may differ, there is a sense that sanctions more often constrain women and enable men. So while it is easy to theorise that women have a choice over their actions, in reality this can constitute very little choice, as the threat of violence applies as much pressure to make certain choices as the act of violence itself (Morrell, 1998).

In a panel discussion as part of the '16 days of activism' government campaign, Lindiwe Mazibuko (2011) concluded 'it is dangerous to be a woman in South Africa.' This came after admitting that although there are no reliable government statistics kept on domestic violence, the estimate was that the figure for annual combined rape/sexual violence offences stood at 56,272 (Mazibuko, 2011). These figures highlight the constraining power that Giddens talks about, which may disproportionately affect the movement of TWC practitioners who work in spaces that experience high levels of crime.

### **Sanctions and women's voice**

Feminist concerns over whose voice is heard and whose voice counts are particularly relevant with regard to post-colonial trends in development towards local

empowerment. Mohan and Stokke (2000) argue that essentialising the 'local' is to disguise the true nature of power relations in development situations. When development projects espousing the principles of Freire (1970) and Chambers (1994) claim to give voice to local people, it is not always clear who these 'local people' actually are that are shaping the development of the community. One cannot assume that 'local' means 'a representative cross section of the community' and where it doesn't, women's voices may be marginalised over men's. Consequently researchers and practitioners need to pay attention to 'hegemonic and counter hegemonic interests' at all levels and within a variety of social groups (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, p. 247).

Critics of participatory development projects argue that in order to transform they must understand the ways that participation relates to existing power structures (Hickey & Mohan, 2004, p. 5). Kapoor (2004) elaborates on this point by explaining the participatory space as a panoptic one.

'even *if* subalterns speak, they (like anyone) may perform the roles they think are expected of them (by their own communities, the facilitator, the funding agency). They may modify their speech when under pressure, or exaggerate their praise to please the funder. So much, then, for Chambers wanting to banish power to enable the subaltern 'to speak' (Kapoor, 2004, p. 636).

Development projects that seek to empower women may actually do no more than contribute to gender stereotypes that portray females as quiet and passive. This is taken further by Rowland's (1995) analysis of 'empowerment' in development that highlights the manner by which oppression is frequently internalised to the extent that the effects are mistaken for reality and to some degree reified (Giddens, 1984). For example, women who are subject to abuse when they voice opinions stop voicing their opinions, which over time leads them to believe that they have no opinions of their own. In such cases, overt use of coercive power to silence women is no longer necessary. Foucault's disciplinary power and potentially self-imposed silence is relevant to development in several ways. Firstly, women who attend workshops and do not contribute verbally may be judged as refusing to participate, rather than silenced by invisible power constraints. Secondly, development practitioners' agency may be

constrained by their own internalised oppression. In the context of South Africa the internalisation of inferiority of non-white groups may still be experienced post-apartheid (Ramphela, 2008).

### **Western feminists' role in silencing other women**

'According to Foucault the production of discourse is organised, controlled and distributed by procedures which conjure up the power and danger of words and exercise surveillance over what is uttered, in what circumstances and on those people who are entitled to utter it' (Magalhães, 2005, p. 184). For radical and black feminists (Hooks, 1990; Mama, 2000; Eisenstein, 2011), Western feminist discourses have dominated development, rendering non-Western women as either silent or heard through the voices of white Western feminist scholars. As a European researcher I am mindful of these critiques and aim to take a hyper-self-reflexive methodological (Kapoor, 2004) approach to this study (I elaborate on this further in chapter 4).

### **Foucault, panoptic power and development**

Foucault identifies disciplinary forms of power that work 'analogously to Bentham's design for the panopticon, motivated and implemented by the multiple and diverse operation of power in the most minute and apparently inconsequential ways' (Downing, 2008, p. 83). One method of surveillance identified by Foucault is the collation of files, documents and records (Smart, 1985, p. 87), so although hierarchical observation may involve being watched by another person, their presence can be felt in other ways without them actually being present and overtly watching. For example, TWCs submission of reports and registers to funders is a tracking mechanism, recording what they do and who was present. Practitioners may be more likely to behave in ways that conform to funders' expectations in the knowledge that their actions are being documented.

This type of potentially invisible power is supported by Giddens' theory that incorporates subtle forms of compliance (Giddens, 1984, p. 173). Foucault enhances Giddens' notion of sanctional constraints by emphasising the way in which social control has become self-imposed in modern culture, and untraceable to any one source. (I come back to this form of power in chapter 3 to help explain the use of critical discourse analysis). Foucault sees the extent of this mode of control as a 'constant and unyielding' influence (Downing, 2008, p. 79). It follows then that I cannot



merely ask people about how they see power. I need to look at the ways that it works as an elusive force that is unobvious. In doing so, I am brought back to Giddens in that power does not always operate externally to human consciousness; actors have agency and some knowledge of the surreptitious ways that their behaviour is manipulated, but conform none the less. Practically this may mean that practitioners begrudge filling in attendance registers but do it anyway. After a time this becomes so routine that funders no longer need to request attendance registers, as they are filled in and submitted as a matter of course.

In addition to the submission of reports, requirements to complete documents using a preferred language (English), and the value placed on specialist vocabulary, can contribute to structuring hierarchies in and between development organisations. Development speak is an essential qualification for entry into the industry (Eade, 2010, viii). This development discourse can be thought about in several ways that are discussed in the following section.

### **Discursive power**

‘Foucault’s work on the dynamics of discourse and power in the representation of social reality is instrumental in unveiling mechanisms by which a certain order of discourses produce permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible’ (Escobar, 1995, p. 5). This overlaps with reification where particular bodies of knowledge or institutions are consciously or unconsciously used to justify actions. An example could be, to use religion to validate choices as part of God given rules. What this might look like in development is that actions and theories are founded on assumptions about morality that see it as good to help others and that helping is always the right thing to do. This may be justified as part of being a good Christian, or giving to charity as part of the pillars of Islam. To suggest that helping someone is not a good thing, and ignoring the plight of others, sits outside the rules of morality and is therefore absent in the motivations of development practitioners. This was recently illustrated by the condemnation of a TV journalist who filmed a woman being sexually assaulted, rather than intervening to help her (The Week, 2012, p. 21). The assumption that people should help one another if they can is a premise of development theory and action that makes other ways of thinking and speaking inconceivable. To suggest that people should be left to starve is a known

course of action but never one that is considered, and to propose it would be met with disdain.

Those with academic credentials are trusted to provide accurate information about their field. Although they may be criticised or questioned by peers, their knowledge is held as valuable and they speak as experts in their discipline. In development this contributes to a discourse that gives authority to published authors to tell those working in development what they should be doing. Conversely this positions development practitioners as less able to speak about how development should happen and stops them from being taken equally as seriously as academics. Despite having lengthy experience of working in development, practitioners may not be seen as industry experts alongside academic theorists. For that reason, what practitioners say may not be taken as seriously as development theorists, which could constrain their capacity to bring about change. If practitioners begin to regard their opinions as inferior in comparison to high profile figures in development such as Freire, then they may begin to doubt the value of what experience tells them. This is pointed out by Foucault when he says that 'discourse not only restricts, limits and arranges what can and cannot be said about the phenomena within its domain, it also empowers (and disempowers) certain agents to speak on this or that question of fact' (Prior, 1997, p. 70-71).

Another reason for thinking of development in terms of discourse is that it 'makes it possible to maintain focus on domination' (Escobar, 1995, p. 5) in a similar way to Marxist analysis. By looking at development theory and action as part of a discourse, it becomes possible to see how language places people as superior, enabling them to dominate others who are positioned as subordinate. Individuals that are fluent in English and familiar with the authors and development literature are seen as having a superior level of knowledge compared to other people. Practitioners might be explaining development theories to workshop participants in order to avoid dominance and use the medium of English to encourage participation because it's the most common language. However, when practitioners begin a workshop in English, referring to Freire and REFLECT, they intentionally or unintentionally elevate themselves above their audience by communicating their level of knowledge, which gives them the authority to dominate (Knowledge/power).

In spite of aiming to achieve a particular transformative goal, as argued by Giddens (1984), just because levelling power relations is the intention does not mean this is the result. To see development as merely a set of ideas would mask the power dimension of complex terminology contained within it. By viewing development as part of discourse, interactions where people use words that other people do not know or understand can be seen as a form of domination rather than simply a preferred choice of language. Furthermore, when viewed as discourse, use of specialised development terms become normative and alternative methods of communication that perhaps avoid using English or development terminology become inconceivable, which in turn entrenches development discourse.

### **Hegemony and discourse**

Gramsci's concept of hegemony describes times when the 'minds of the dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance, and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own free will' (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 255). As such, discourses may orientate development projects so that they serve capitalist interests and ideologies. TWC practitioners often design projects that aim to give workshop participants a source of income. For example craft workshops teach skills in beading to enable women to sell goods for a profit. The emphasis on generating revenue by expanding their market share in competition with other craft workers contributes to ideologies of materialism and consumerism. As a result, individuals that are targeted for development may take on these capitalist values. This could mean that people are less likely to see the value in projects to educate people about human rights because they do not see the link between attending the workshop and material or financial gain. This orientation to the development of individuals imbues the word 'development' with a particular meaning that could be seen as hegemonic, especially when development is operationalised as economic development.

### **Women in Development (WID) and hegemony**

At the same time as second wave feminism, there began a shift in development theory and practice to take into account the position of women. This gathered momentum in the 1970s and became referred to as Women in Development (WID hereafter) approaches. It drew attention to the discrimination experienced by women from development initiatives in previous decades that assumed that all would benefit

equally as societies increasingly became modernised (Rathgeber, 1990). In contrast a Women and Development (WAD hereafter) approach argues that the individual position of women should be taken into account within capitalist power relations, particularly with regard to working class women (Serothe, Mager & Budlender, 2001). This approach is in keeping with neo-Marxist feminism by recognising how women's unpaid labour contributes to an exploitative social structure. After WID came Gender and Development (GAD) with a focus 'on the relationship between women and the development processes' (Rathgeber, 1990. p. 492).

Marxist feminists and WID critics have used this argument to take issue with economic development initiatives that target mothers as a flexible labour source without relieving them of existing responsibilities (Rathgeber, 1990). Initial analysis of development work may conclude that practitioners choose to put economic interests at the top of their agenda, when in fact they may be compelled to do this through hegemonic dominance. Prevalence of economic development may constrain practitioners to this dominant paradigm that frames non-economic (social, emotional, educational or political) development initiatives as peripheral, alternative or complimentary to workshops aimed at generating an income.

The unintended consequence of thinking only in terms of financial gain means that the recipients of development projects do not have a voice to question initiatives that are aimed at helping them, due to sanctional constraints that are informally imposed. For example, the fear of being judged as 'lazy' or 'a bad mother' for not wanting to take up opportunities to increase your household income, may force women to participate. If participation is seen as an indication of empowerment, this unintentionally reinforces existing capitalist structures and systems, which led to women being in poverty in the first place.

While the aim of WID/WAD/GAD development initiatives have been to improve the lives of women, putting each into practice has resulted in unintended consequences that could be due to structural constraints of tacit global assumptions. For example, increasing household income by involving more women in economic activities assumes that more money means less poverty. This knowledge could be seen as part of capitalist ideology, which has to some degree become reified and externalised,

influencing activities of development organisations to the point where alternatives to income generating projects are seen as pointless. It could be argued that an unintended outcome of the women's movement was to add to women's burden. Women's increasing role in a globalised workforce has positioned them as the main wage earner in many households, in addition to continuing to be seen as responsible for care work, domestic chores and child rearing.

### **Appropriation of Freire to advance neo-liberal aims**

The values of the 'captains of development' capture the ideology, self-understanding and organisations of those affected by international development policies and assistance (Eade, 2010, viii). It could be assumed that these 'captains of development' are global institutions, such as The World Bank and the IMF, that have been criticised for instilling neo-liberal ideologies that have not tackled poverty (Slusser, 2006). Equally though, 'captains of development' could be seen as development theorists that permeate development organisations with particular philosophies. Even thinkers such as Paulo Freire (1973) who value raising critical consciousness may have their ideas manipulated. 'Appropriation of Freire's work is common' by capitalist businesses that claim to use participatory educational experiences (Mayo, 1999, p. 132). By using the language of participation, the illusion of individual control and power is created that maintains existing unequal power relations that serve capitalist interests.

This type of hegemonic power links back to Gramsci's (1971) analysis of dominant ideologies. Capitalist hegemony could explain the absence of an ideology that advocates the removal of Western agencies. Instead, the power relationship between global north and global south has remained, despite the increase in projects that are theoretically based on devolving power (Hughes et al., 2005). Continuation of top-down development is supported by Kothari (2001), who argues that participatory development can encourage a reassertion of control and power by dominant individuals and groups. This leads to reification of social norms through self-surveillance and consensus building (Kothari, 2001, p. 142).

Writings around the 'tyranny of participation' criticise participatory methods as failing to engage with issues of power and politics (Kapoor, 2002, Hickey & Mohan, 2004, p. 4). They go on to argue that this can de-politicise what, particularly from a Freirean theory of education, is an explicitly political process. Kapoor (2004) uses Kamat's (2002)

comparative analysis of large and grassroots NGOs to conclude that each 'ends up casting off its political militancy...neither meaningfully questions 'development.' (Kapoor, 2004, p. 635). In failing to challenge state authority NGOs unintentionally, despite labeling initiatives as radical or participatory, legitimise state hegemony and reproduce development discourse (Kapoor, 2004). This too is an illustration of the workings of social systems where NGOs have knowledge of the structure and are critical of it, but cannot control the consequences of their actions and remain constrained by the state. This implies that transformative capacity requires more than knowledge of theories, and that what creates capacity to do things in one setting cannot necessarily be replicated in another time or space.

However, this is not to say that hegemonic power denies agency and potential for change. Foucault reminds us in his work on 'governmentality' that 'even the most powerful masters of meanings can never completely secure the capture of language for their own projects. It is in the strategic reversibility of discourse he argues, that the potential for resistance and transgression lies' (Cornwall, 2010, p. 13). Giddens' illustration using language to demonstrate enablement and constraint comes in again here, as language simultaneously contributes to the influence of the powerful, but can also be used as a tool of 'mobilisation and resistance' (Cornwall, 2010, p. 13). I see the role of Sociology as partly to achieve mobilisation and resistance through relativising aspects of society. My presence as researcher aims to disrupt how development practitioners may have come to see their work as part of natural daily conduct. I hope to bring into sight the way that social situations, no matter how mundane, are charged with social meaning (Mills, 1959 cited in Graaff, 2001, p. 5). For example when practitioners explain the language of development to me, it may bring in to question the impact that language has and its place in the culture of development work.

## Chapter 3 Research methodology

### Introduction

My decision to opt for participant observation and semi-structured interviews was informed by interpretive, interactionist and qualitative sociological traditions that conform to what can be loosely phrased as feminist philosophies.

Overall my methodology has been influenced by my radical feminist values and the nature of the operationalisation of power via Giddens (1991) and Foucault (Downing, 2008). I used what Miller calls a 'bridging approach' as a metaphor for triangulation, by focussing on 'several methodological strategies to link aspects of different sociological perspectives...providing a venue for dialogue between different interpretive frameworks' (Miller, 1997, p. 25). I wanted to bridge interpretive interactionist methods, feminist approaches to social science, and critical discourse analysis to investigate power.

I have divided this chapter into four parts. **Part one** describes how I began the study. I explain how I initially arrived at the use of participant observation and how my observations and field notes were used to formulate my research question and sub questions.

**Part two** addresses the theory of each type of data collection that I used. I begin with a look at the decisions I made about the type of participation I would carry out, including the strengths and limitations of observation. I go on to focus on three key decisions around participant/non-participant, overt/covert and insider/outsider status. I revisit these themes later in part two through the discussion of feminist methodology. Within this section I justify the use of semi-structured interviews and an explanation of how I formulated the interview questions. I end this section by moving on to data analysis, with an explanation of critical discourse analysis and why I decided this was particularly appropriate for the study of power.

**Part three** builds on my justification for the use of a combination of qualitative methods with reference to feminist methodology. Here I use the limitations of the study to highlight differences between what I aimed to achieve and what I experienced in

reality. This fleshes out where I locate myself as a researcher and elaborates on how I utilised each method.

**Part four** is a brief summary of how I could have modified my methods in light of the limitations of the study.

## **Part 1. How the research started**

Rather than choosing a research question and then gaining access to a group to investigate, I instead chose to use an intermediary to identify a local community group that was actively seeking input from a university student. From the Knowledge Co-op website (University of Cape Town, 2012) I saw TWC were seeking assistance in the development of human rights workshops. The use of participant observation was initially dictated by the nature of the relationship between the practitioners and myself, established in our first meeting. In return for the opportunity to conduct research, which at this point was as yet undefined, I agreed to assist them in designing their human rights workshops. I ruled out non-participant observation or covert observation because our agreement meant that I must involve myself in their work, which is the reciprocal researcher-researched relationship that I sought (Appendix I).

I took observation notes during meetings that I attended in the first month and reflected on them at home alone, annotating notes with personal thoughts. For example, after the planning meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2011, I wrote 'There is clearly a hierarchy at work here and a power dynamic at play between the women' (line 177, field notes). It was around this time after discussions with my supervisor and returning to relevant literature, that I formulated the following questions.

**Research question:** How do discourses enable and constrain the power of development practitioners in interactions within The Women's Circle?

Based on Giddens' overarching theory of power where structure and action construct one another, I composed the following sub-questions:

- 1) What discourses inform practitioners' interactions and how do interactions inform discourses?



- 2) What role do discourses play in practitioners' interactions and what role do interactions play in shaping discourses?

The choice of The Women's Circle as a case study was driven by my own feminist research values. The research question and choice of overt participant observation stemmed from spending time with the women in the initial phase of fieldwork.

## **Part 2. Explanation of proposed data collection and data analysis methods**

### **The theory of participant observation and an evaluation of overt participant observation**

Participant observation stems from an interactionist theoretical approach developed by Herbert Blumer (Gobo, 2008, p. 39). Three strands of interactionism (adapted from Silverman, 1993 cited in Gobo, 2008, p. 48) that I draw on are:

- **studying the situated character of interactions**

I particularly focus on exchanges that are situated within development work comprised of meetings, workshops and the interview situation. Although I participated in other interactions such as bus journeys to and from workshops, these have been peripheral and my conclusions are based mostly on data gathered in meetings and interviews.

- **analysing processes instead of structures**

I aimed to avoid the determinism of predicting behaviour from class, gender or race. I particularly focussed on the process of discourse formation and the work of discourses positioning practitioners in different power relationships.

- **generalising from descriptions to theories**

I generalise about the work of discourse in meetings, workshops and interviews with practitioners. I do not intend for discourses to be generalised beyond these situations, though there may be similarities between the work of discourse in this study and in similar organisations.

### Strengths and limitations of overt participant observation

The following table (Figure 2) is a summary of some of the advantages and disadvantages of overt participant observation (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald, 2000, pp. 1009 - 1012).

**Figure 2. Summary evaluation of overt participant observation**

| Advantages  | Disadvantages  |
|---|--|
| The researcher can ask questions about the behaviour they are observing to gain more in-depth understanding.  | The presence of a researcher 'may affect the behaviour of those being studied' (p.1009), known as the Hawthorne effect.  |
| The researcher can avoid participation in 'distasteful, immoral or illegal behaviour' (p.1009). There is a degree of choice over the researcher's level of involvement.                     | There is a danger of 'going native' and becoming too involved in the lives of participants, which prevents researchers from remaining objective.   |
| Researchers are less likely to impose their own view of reality on the social world they seek to understand.  | A detached researcher may not understand what they are observing.  |
| It is more difficult for participants to mislead or lie to the researcher than with other research methods.   | It's time consuming, inconvenient and demanding.   |
| Researchers can better put themselves in the position of participants and therefore understand why they interact with others in particular ways.  | Findings of studies using participant observation are open to criticism for lacking objectivity, being unreliable and 'depend too much on the interpretations of the observer' (p.1011). |
| It is difficult for complete participants (as with overt participant observation) to be detached and objective, 'it is easier for an outsider to comment on group relationships.' (p.1011). | Any conclusions can only be applied to the group under study and are specific to a particular place and time.  |

I found the manner in which generic strengths and limitations of methods are crudely divided into binary categories, as in the above table, difficult to apply to my specific research setting. An in-depth discussion of all of the facets of observation applied to the study of the work of development practitioners is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead I would like to focus on three most prominent continuums within participant observation that I considered before and during the research process. These are the spectrums of participant/nonparticipant, overt/covert observation and my role as an insider/outsider.

### **Participant vs non-participant observation**

The advantages of overt observation as claimed by Haralambos et al (2000) are that researchers can choose their level of involvement in the research settings that they find themselves in (See Figure 2). Resultantly, I thought I could take a more active role in meetings as part of my obligation to help plan workshops, but switch to non-participant observation during the actual workshops by merely observing and taking notes. I assumed my status as an untrained development practitioner, would be one that would exempt me from taking part in facilitating workshops that I attended. This led me to conclude that the transition from participant to non-participant observer would be unproblematic. The other advantage of this as I saw it, would be to protect my research from criticism that the study was too subjective (stressed in Figure 2). Despite no overt criticism from my academic tutors since beginning postgraduate study, I still feel pressure to defend qualitative methods against criticism that it is not objective enough. Similar feelings are touched on by other researchers conducting participant observation for the first time, such as Reger (2001).

### **Overt vs covert observation**

I considered the fact that I had declared my research interests from the outset as firmly placing my method as overt participant observation. I understood the overt researcher role 'as fundamentally more ethical than the covert participant observer' (McKenzie, 2009). I aimed to adhere to ethical principles of 'reciprocity, honesty, accountability, responsibility, and equality' (Skeggs, 2001, p. 433). In practice this involved working with TWC to assist them in developing their human rights workshops in return for interviewing four practitioners, an agreement that was brokered through the UCT Knowledge Co-op. I felt I had accessed the research setting by invitation and did not begin research until Vicky had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix I).

### **Insider vs outsider status**

Some argue that participant observation allows the researcher to observe the social interactions with 'as little disruption as possible to normal settings' (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002, p. 7). This implies that observation allows access to gathering data from a setting that is not as artificially created when compared to an interview situation. I previously thought that by doing the work of development practitioners I could minimise the disruption prompted by my presence. Over time I thought it would be possible to become an 'insider' to some degree, indicated by no longer being seen as a stranger, gaining acceptance, trust and co-operation from the women (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002, p. 16).

I considered that the advantage of becoming an insider would be that I would have a greater understanding of the many aspects of development work in South Africa. I felt this was a particularly important learning process to go through, as I had no previous experience in adult education. In a similar way to the gains made by Whyte (1993), I hoped to find the answers to questions I wouldn't have known to ask if I had only used an interview or survey. The extent of my success in achieving insider status is discussed in chapter 4.

### **Field notes**

Acknowledging the role that I played in shaping the research settings that I observed, I used field notes as an opportunity to note down not only what I was observing but also my initial thoughts (see lines 74 and 75 in Appendix II). I would describe my field note taking as similar to Goffman's 'jottings made according to impressions made according to the actual moment' (Gobo, 2008, p. 43), in an attempt to grasp phenomena as they unfolded. Notes were an essential aid to data collection bearing in mind I could only fully understand what I was seeing in light of future developments (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 77). These notes were in a journal that doubled as a de-briefing tool after the interviews.

### **The theory of semi structured interviews and composition of interview questions**

Interviews as a concept have a varied history as a research technique (Platt, 2001) as well as a connection with non-research settings such as job interviews. I interpreted the interview as 'a mechanism for eliciting what people say they do' (Atkinson &

Coffey, 2002, p. 809) rather than a substitute for action. Atkinson and Coffey (2002) criticise the use of both observation and interviews, where interviews are used to merely support data gathered via observation. Their argument is that observation is elevated as the more superior method because researchers can see actors' actions, rather than relying on actors' accounts of their actions. I would therefore like to point out that I did not use interviews to verify the data gathered via observation, and that I did not privilege data gathered by observation over data gathered by interviews.

Rather, I used the interview situation for other purposes in addition to providing an account of the practitioners' narrative. For example, the interviews were the only opportunity I had to be alone with each practitioner. This was important in providing a space for practitioners and myself to talk about the research in private. So interviews were an opportunity to ask me questions, or air any thoughts or feelings that practitioners wanted to draw attention to. I kept the number of questions to a minimum and although I asked the respondents to allow about 45 minutes to speak to me, I did not stick to this as a cut off if respondents wanted to talk for longer about anything else, whether relevant to my research question or not.

### **Formulation of interview questions**

I composed interview questions (see Appendix III) to prompt a conversation about power in the lives of women in their role as development practitioners. The point of the interview was to base the findings in women's experiences, then use critical discourse analysis to link these to structural workings of power. This way of working is consistent with Giddens' structuration theory (1984) where there exists a two way process of individual agency shaping society and the capacity of society to transform the individual. Thus discourse informs development interactions, which in turn alters discourse.

I used four questions that were taken from an exercise in Kaplan's (2002) book. The exercise aims to get people who are involved in development organisations to consider power relations in their particular context. Apart from focussing the conversation on power, it contributed to the emancipatory aims of the enquiry in line with feminist methodology (elaborated on later in this chapter).

My other question was inspired by Freire's account of an investigation undertaken by Gabriel Bode. Rather than presenting participants with a questionnaire he had elaborated himself, he instead presents them with an image in which participants could recognise themselves, so that they said (or were more likely to say) what they really felt (Freire, 1970, p. 111). Similarly I presented the four women with a situation that we had all witnessed, and asked interviewees to deconstruct the incident. I used the moment in a meeting, when Asura was the only practitioner who would not sit down for the entire duration, and commented 'This is why I stand, I'm not giving up my power for anybody' (field notes, line 358). Rather than relying on my interpretation of this interaction I asked the practitioners, including Asura, to explain how power worked in this situation.

### **The theory of data analysis via critical discourse analysis**

My approach to interpreting interview transcripts and field notes sits within the discipline of critical language studies, specifically critical discourse analysis (CDA). CDA is where 'what is analysed is not simply what was thought or said per se, but all the discursive rules and categories that were a priori, assumed as a constituent part of discourse and therefore knowledge, and so fundamental that they remained unvoiced and unthought' (Foucault, 1981, p. 48). This differs from thematic analysis where words are more likely to be taken at face value rather than examining what informs language.

The advantage of this method of analysis over alternatives such as conversation analysis, is that CDA shows up 'connections which may be hidden from people' demonstrating the link between language, power and ideology (Fairclough, 1989, p. 5). Furthermore CDA makes 'connections between micro structures of conversation and the macro structures of social institutions' (Fairclough, 1989, p. 5), which links to Giddens' (1984) duality of structure on which my theory of power is based.

'Discourse, following Foucault, refers to a set of related statements, manifested multimodally through an interplay, for example language and visual structures that produce and organise a particular order of reality and specific subject positions therein' (Lazar, 2005, p. 143). This means there exist vocabularies that constrain the way we think about and act in the world (Wooffitt, 2005, p. 146). CDA also has an underlying concern to identify injustices in the structure of society and seeks to ameliorate the

conditions of the groups who suffer them (Wooffitt, 2005, p. 139), which conforms with feminist principles to make sure research is socially engaged (see later in this chapter).

Ideology 'though used in several different ways, is a systematic set of beliefs, which serve the interests of some social group in society' (Lawson & Garrod, 2000, p. 136). Ideology then contributes to maintaining consensus and retaining power through discourse. To use alternative qualitative analysis, such as thematic analysis, may serve to merely reproduce dominant ideologies rather than uncover how they work through discourse to position development practitioners.

CDA focuses on what language communicates beyond the explicit meaning of the words themselves. The speaker controls linguistic features that give a force to their representation which Kress and Hodge call modality (Dant, 1991). These features are evident from the different ways in which people phrase what they want to say, known as modes of speaking. These differences in modality are important in providing information about the power relations operating in discourses that both constrain and enable the exchange of meanings, without relying on reconstructing subjective intentions to understand the meanings exchanged. This is the attempt to relate linguistic structure to social structure and would be the basis for indicating the ideological effects of linguistic structures (Dant, 1991, p. 161). Analysis of modality makes possible the link between the individual and structural levels of society (Giddens, 1991).

Using Johnstone (2008, pp. 3-10) I have drawn up a list of questions to investigate how discourse operates, to aid the practical work of identifying the functions of language use in each transcript:

- Are some words or phrases repeated significantly more frequently than others?
- What theoretical perspective is the speaker taking? For example, feminist/ Marxist?
- Why are explanations this way and no other way? For example, why do people position themselves using a medical discourse rather than a religious one?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What motivated them to speak in this way?

- How is discourse shaped by ideologies that circulate power in society?
- What sources are there of creativity and constraint?
- How are others depicted? What parts of the text that when applied to others, can equally be applied to oneself?
- What assumptions are being made?

I went through each transcript focussing on each question in turn as advocated by de Wet and Erasmus (2005) to aid rigour to qualitative analysis. From the themes identified, I picked the ones that appeared most frequently across all four interviews and/or in field notes from meetings and workshops. The process of data gathering and analysis was non-linear and iterative (de Wet & Erasmus, 2005). As such I located myself within a feminist framework that steered my beliefs and values about how data gathering should be conducted. It is this to which I now turn my attention by comparing the theory of feminist methodology with what I experienced in practice.

### **Part 3. Reflections on field work and limitations of the study in the pursuit of feminist methodology**

#### **Feminist orientation towards research**

When I refer to feminist methods or a feminist approach to studying, I mean a methodology that assumes the production of value free research is undesirable and in any case unachievable (Harding & Norberg, 2005). What I want to take from feminist approaches to social science (Harding & Norberg, 2005, pp. 2010-2015) is the importance of the following attributes:

- **Social research should be socially engaged**

Participation for me involved being socially engaged in the sense that I sought to empower practitioners to some degree. By empowerment I mean encouraging resistance to and fostering the 'capacity of an agent to act in spite of or in response to the power wielded over her by others' (Allen, 1998, p. 34). Historically, power wielded over third world women has involved silencing them (Hooks, 1990; Thiam, 1995). I attempted to 'give voice' to a group of female, non-white, women practitioners that have historically been somewhat invisible.



- **The researcher should understand intersectionality**

While there may be a sense of unity fostered by a shared opposition to sexist, racist and imperialist structures among TWC practitioners, I recognise and am conscious of the fact that third world women do not constitute a cohesive homogenous group by virtue of being 'third world women' (Mohanty, 2002). I needed to take into account the unique individuality of all the people that I came into contact with throughout the research journey. Differences in race, religion, class, sexuality and other structural features should not be used to pre-judge or 'pigeon hole' people but to avoid the inappropriate essentialising of men and women (Harding & Norberg, 2005). Avoiding treating women as harmonised conforms to a WAD approach to development, which is a departure from the historic uniform attitude towards women.

Although conclusions drawn from this study may in part be applicable to other practitioners in similar positions, I do not assume this link exists. This study is only representative of the four women that participated in the study and my interpretation of the discourses that were at work.

- **The researcher should aim to minimise power differences between them and the research participants**

Rolin (2009) concludes that feminist orientations to research are more alert to effects of power than other approaches to social enquiry. Sensitivity to informants' feelings in the process of data gathering, for example feeling intimidated or uncomfortable, means a researcher is more likely to understand about how power relations work. This is particularly important in researching a development organisation, where practitioners may be concerned with how TWC is portrayed and the implications this could have for future funding. To this end I attempted to minimise the difference in power relations, while simultaneously making this a part of the focus of my topic of study.

I now consider how successfully I managed to combine these aims using observation, interviews and critical discourse analysis.

## **Participant vs non-participant observation in workshops**

From September 2011 to March 2012 I only observed the facilitation of three workshops. This was firstly due to participants not attending workshops when I was present. Secondly, workshops did not run for two weeks of the month when it was 'all pay'<sup>4</sup>. Thirdly, workshops cease over the summer from November to January. Although the workshops I observed were few, they were crucial to enriching my insight into interactions within TWC and building rapport with practitioners.

My original plan to participate in planning meetings but not in workshops was not possible. My experience of participant observation was very different in each of the three workshops that I went to. In the first one I was theoretically able to sit, listen and observe the practitioners 'teach,' but in practice I was very distracted by children roaming about. I didn't feel I could justify ignoring the toddlers on the basis that I was doing research because it was obvious that I was an extra pair of hands. My role as child carer meant that note taking was difficult so they are less detailed than I would have liked them to be. On another occasion I was asked to join in with the workshop activity. I found it hard to say 'no' because I didn't want people to think that I was above anyone else. In places where there was a carpet I sat on the floor so that everyone else was forced to look downwards at me, in an attempt to literally study from below. In that same session I gave away all my stationery because participants had been asked to take notes and needed a pen. My analysis is therefore based on interview transcripts and field notes from meetings, not observations from workshops as originally planned.

When research methods literature talks of being able to choose the level of participation by opting for overt participant observation, I found this choice constituted very little choice at all when I was in the field. I felt I couldn't merely observe from the sidelines and subsequently claim to be minimising power differences as advocated by feminist methodology. The value of attending the workshops instead became more about communicating my dedication to the cause, to show that I was willing to do the long journeys on public transport, stand around in the wind waiting for participants, and see what doing development was like from the women's point of view. I would not

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<sup>4</sup> 'All pay' is a slang term referring to the time of the month when people entitled to social grants receive their allowance.

have been able to interview Asura had I not proved myself in the preceding weeks. In short, 'walking the path' with the women each week demonstrated that I had some understanding of what their work was like. Even though this wasn't the focus of my research question, on reflection it was essential in getting to know the women and establishing trust and rapport.

### **Participant vs non-participant observation in meetings**

Participation for me meant not merely doing as the women did in a copycat fashion. Participation meant actively striving to ensure that my research was ethically and politically accountable, avoiding Eurocentric or other orientations to the study of people that make no attempt to see things from the perspective of the participants in the study (Harding & Norberg, 2005). This meant trying to walk the fine line between being on guard not to impose my own values on participants, while remaining committed to bringing about change and being ethically sound.

I tried to incorporate Spivak's 'heightened self-reflexivity' (Kapoor, 2004, p. 628) into as much of my approach to research as possible. I did this by actively trying to 'unlearn dominant systems of knowledge and representation' (Kapoor, 2004, p. 641) and in doing so encourage the practitioners to do the same. In practice this meant stopping myself 'from always wanting to correct, teach, theorise, develop, colonise, appropriate, use, record, inscribe, enlighten: 'the impetus to *a/ways* be the speaker and speak in all situations must be seen for what it is: a desire for mastery and domination' (Spivak, 1990 cited in Kapoor, 2004, p. 642). Holding this thought, I tried to remain silent as much as possible, in order to ensure that participants felt heard beyond merely recording their responses to my questions in meetings and the interview. I took a Xhosa language course so that at the very least I could greet people in Xhosa and correctly pronounce names and places. In doing so I tried to avoid compounding the hegemony of the English language (Descarries, 2003) and the stereotype that British people don't learn other people's languages because they expect everyone to speak English.

I was keen to hear the voices of women where I was not the one posing questions. Participant observation allowed me to witness discussions and decision-making as it happened in the course of the working day. I acknowledge that the limitation of observation is that my presence may have shaped these questions. For example,

questions may have been raised in meetings to impress me, or raised as a result of my presence, that may not have been in my absence. Despite this limitation it meant that the women were more likely to feel like active participants in the research process (Kasper, 1994, p. 266), which was more important to me than attempting to minimise the Hawthorne effect (where research participants change their behaviour because they know they are being observed).

### **Overt vs Covert observation and ethical dilemmas**

As discussed by McKenzie (2009) the line between overt and covert observation is far from as clear-cut as it is implied in textbooks such as Haralambos et al (2000). This blurring manifested itself in different ways and had implications for research ethics.

Firstly, until the practitioners had signed a consent form (Appendix IV) I did not record the meetings, instead relying on notes that I took. After practitioners had signed the consent form I recorded the meetings but continued to take written notes as a back up. I kept the recorder in my bag so that it was not intrusive. However, I did not gain consent from the workshop participants that I observed beyond describing myself as a researcher. Although I did not end up using much from what I observed in the workshop, the participants did not know what I was writing down or why.

Secondly, at the outset of the research when Vicky signed the memorandum of agreement, she was acting on behalf of other practitioners who appeared to have little choice over whether I started sitting in on meetings or not.

Thirdly, it wasn't until the interview when Vicky specifically asked me what my research question was, that I told her. Indeed I could not predict exactly what the research would be about until I had analysed the transcripts, which made being fully open with practitioners all the way through the fieldwork difficult. So although my research was overt because practitioners were aware of my presence, at times it felt covert when I knew the recorder was not in plain view and I was unsure of exactly where the next stage of research would lead me.

Fourthly, my role was further complicated after the interviews. Having guaranteed confidentiality in the interview setting, I had to think before I spoke in meetings to make sure that I didn't reveal anything that had been said to me in confidence. I felt like I

was keeping secrets and that this could potentially disrupt the relationships between the women who may wonder what the others had told me in their interviews. Other than worrying about it, this concern has not had a significant consequence on this research project, though it is something that I will be more mindful of in future.

Lastly, often feedback to participants of research is largely ignored or treated as unproblematic (MacLeod, Masilela & Malomane, 1998) and this was something I should have thought more about. Even though power inevitably enters any relationship, I worry that if/when practitioners read this study, they will be unhappy with how I have represented them and the organisation. Smail (1994) sums this up in relation to the field of Psychology: 'It might of course be that people are unimpressed by both our knowledge and our methods, which they would be entirely entitled to be – but at least they wouldn't be in the dark about what we get up to' (Smail, 1994, p. 8). I plan to visit each of the women to give them a summary of my findings and explain exactly how I arrived at them, giving them ample opportunity to ask any questions.

Sections of transcripts and field notes can be found in the Appendices and are cited throughout chapter 4. Where evidence is not in the Appendices it is cited as being in the transcript (e.g. Vicky's transcript, line 2) or field notes (e.g. field notes, line 1). Full transcripts and the entire field note journal (both available on request) have not been included in order to protect the identity of the four research participants, as TWC is a small organisation. I have changed their names<sup>5</sup> and not included a description of their socio-economic background. I have anonymised other practitioners and organisations that are mentioned by TWC practitioners. They appear in brackets, for example (trainee 1) or (practitioner Y).

### **Semi structured interviews**

I initially chose to interview three women (Vicky, Gemma and Nancy) with whom I felt I had had the most contact after one month of participant observation. I explained that I intended to spend time with them, observing and recording what they said in meetings and in interviews. I talked them through the consent form and elaborated on how I would use the data, and that it would not be shared with other researchers. I reminded each interviewee they did not have to answer the questions and could end the interview at any time. I ended up interviewing a fourth practitioner, Asura, who hadn't

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<sup>5</sup> Interviewees were asked to choose a pseudonym, which I used.

been at the introductory meeting, but became a key informant from January 2012 onwards after Gemma left TWC. Asura gave oral consent to be part of the study during a meeting when I first met her and before I approached her for an interview at a workshop. Her interview was the only one that had not been pre arranged.

Beyond gathering more information specific to power, I wanted the interview to provide a space for the women to reflect on self empowerment, something that I felt they had neglected due to the focus always being on how they wanted to help other people. This was part of the emancipatory feminist element of the project, but equally simply a quiet time for practitioners to think about themselves and their relationships, amongst the busy schedule that all of them kept not only in their work but in their private lives too. All the participants had families and places to be, other than being interviewed by me. This made me conscious to strike a balance between encouraging practitioners to talk freely while not impinging on their time. I attempted this by asking them to choose a time and venue that suited them. Two of the four chose to schedule the interview immediately before a meeting. This meant that the interview couldn't run over and forced me to stick to the 45 minutes I had originally said interviews would take. (This may have been intentional or unintentional). The other two took place in practitioners' homes, which made a big difference. For example, they smoked during the interview which they wouldn't have been able to do in the community centre where the other two interviews happened.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

'Giving voice' is contested in feminist literature and is not guaranteed by adopting a view from below or inductive research methods (Gorelick, 1991) or by presenting analysis using 'thick descriptions' and narratives (McNamara, 2009). These are insufficient in light of Freire's critiques (outlined in chapter 1) of liberation through obeying leaders that have imposed their views (1970, p. 120). Instead dialogue and critical reflection are essential between groups that via cultural invasion may have become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority/superiority (Freire, 1970, p151). Hence taking practitioners' words at face value may result in the omission of reified knowledge in interview accounts. Through critical analysis I hoped to expose the women to alternative ideological positions that may alter the extent to which their interactions are shaped by hegemonic discourses and inform how they interpret the world. In doing so, research may prompt 'the realisation that their social experiences

are collective and not merely individual' (Rolin, 2009, p. 224) strengthening existing tendencies to resist power over development practitioners.

I do not exclude myself from taking part in this process of realisation and do not assume that my position as a social researcher exempts me from the power of dominant discourses. However as Foucault (1981) notes, it is possible to undermine, expose and thwart the power transmitted and produced by discourse (p. 51). I think the extent to which I achieved this was severely limited. Each practitioner used the interview to serve their own purpose rather than viewing it as an opportunity to critically evaluate. In meetings I spoke as little as possible to make sure I was listening on all levels (CDRA, 2003), rather than thinking about what I wanted to say. Such considerations meant the opportunity to challenge practitioners were few and were sacrificed in the interest of not further burdening the women, merely to indulge my emancipatory goals.

I contributed to entrenching the hierarchy that places academics towards the top by myself being part it, and attempting to recruit practitioners to enrol at the University of Cape Town. For example, I gave a trainee practitioner a Sociology textbook to help her decide if it was something she might be interested in studying and told a second trainee about bursaries that were available. I encouraged both of them to apply to do a degree and offered to help them fill in application forms if they needed it. Although I tried to avoid positioning myself as an expert, I contributed to the superiority of academic qualifications that is part of the image of an expert. 'The opposite of power is not its absence but the resistance it provokes; sociologists, so the argument goes, should be laying the groundwork for citizen resistance rather than fostering the existence and effectiveness of expert power' (Bloor, 1997, p. 234). Thus, I have somewhat undermined the credibility of this study as a critical endeavour that challenges dominant power structures, by conforming to the very discourses I sought to disrupt.

### **Part 3 Conclusion**

In my pursuit of a feminist methodology, I feel I can only claim to a limited extent that I levelled power relations or that my study was empowering for the four women that I interviewed. It seems I have fallen prey to the gap between theory and practice that I have identified in my research participants' development work (see chapter 5).

## **Part 4. Some suggested modifications in light of the limitations of the study**

I could have made more effort to observe more workshops by perhaps skipping some TWC meetings so that I had more free time. This was difficult as I had Masters courses that I needed to attend that clashed with Gemma's craft workshop and Vicky was often facilitating at the same time as other practitioners that observed in (location b). I felt that availing myself for two days a week was sufficient, but ideally I would have been more flexible and been able to see all of the people that I interviewed facilitate a workshop. This may have given me a better understanding of how discourses worked in workshops and how they varied from one practitioner to another.

Having reflected on interactions between TWC practitioners and workshop participants, I could have spoken to participants while observing and ideally interviewed them too. Not including a sample of their views could be seen as further entrenching the power of practitioners and affirms participants' place at the bottom of the hierarchy. For example I would I have like to have asked them what their motivations were for coming to the workshops to either confirm or falsify TWC practitioner's claims that they were only there for the food. The impact of this omission on the outcomes of the study is limited because my research question focussed on the power of practitioners, though it is difficult to gauge what value it would have had in the absence of this information.

Given more time I would like to have conducted a longitudinal study to focus on how discourses and their associated interpretive and interactional practices change over time. This could provide 'insights into the potentially unstable and changing character of language, culture and institutions' (Miller, 1997, p. 40). For example it would be interesting to see differences over a 25 year period, in light of new approaches to development and feminist ideologies that come to the fore, against a backdrop of changing political landscape in South Africa.



## Chapter 4 Research findings and analysis

### Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts. In **part one** analysis is grouped according to the three research settings that I was involved in namely meetings, workshops and interviews. In each context I set the scene in which interactions took place with accounts from the practitioners that are relevant to power.

**Part two** sets out definitions and explanations of three discourses that I felt to be the most dominant. Adapted from terminology found in other studies and literature, these are 'development discourse,' 'practitioner control discourse' and 'Western feminist discourse.' Each forms a heading under which I define each discourse, before expanding on how they work by applying them to the different research settings set out in part one. Key quotes and a larger body of data are used to support my findings, which are in appendices that are cited throughout the chapter.

### Part 1. Research settings

To examine the interactions and conversations in TWC, I attended meetings in a community centre and workshops in Delft, from September 2011 to March 2012. I interviewed four TWC practitioners during February and March 2012. These interviews form the main source of evidence, supported by field notes from observations in TWC meetings and workshops run by practitioners.

#### Meetings and 'meeting discourse'

In this section I give some background information about the 13 TWC meetings that I attended. As discussed by Hicks (1995) knowledge of what happens in meetings and how they are conducted becomes part of a shared history of development practitioners. A meeting discourse is socially constructed and therefore not neutral or value free (Hicks, 1995, p. 52). This meeting discourse that has been internalised by practitioners positions them in different power relationships. This may alter during the course of the meeting and from one meeting to another, but the meeting discourse continues to normalise particular patterns of interaction. These patterns are summarised by the following points:

- 5 out of the 13 meetings were held in the hall rather than in the two meeting rooms that are available. Vicky decided that Mondays were the best day to hold planning meetings because no one else used the community centre on that day. On 4<sup>th</sup> October a woman arrived having not booked the hall and a conversation began about whether she should be allowed to use it.

This dispute over the use of the hall is significant as the meetings discourse positions the women as gatekeepers of a space that they do not own. On the 17<sup>th</sup> October we are sat in the hall and the same person arrives again. While she knocks on the front door practitioners briefly stay silent before continuing to talk in whispers, as if pretending not to be there. The space is no longer free for anyone to use as the title 'community centre' implies. This form of sanctional power (Giddens, 1991) constrains others that practitioners interact with to use the booking system, even though people who have not booked could be accommodated, which enables TWC to dominate the space. Cornwall's (2004) discussion of the dynamics of power and difference within 'invited spaces' becomes relevant here. She notes that what happens in one domain impinges on the other and the relations of power across them are constantly being reconfigured (Cornwall, 2004, p. 76-78).

The possibility that the space in which discussions take place can impact on the equality of voices of those present is supported by Kohn (2000), who suggests that deliberative spaces are discursively constituted in ways that permit only particular voices and versions to enter the debate (Kohn, 2000 in Cornwall, 2004, p. 79). In TWC meetings the space is dominated by the chairperson (elaborated on in part 2 of this chapter).

- Up until January 2012 meetings did not have an agenda, but generally the purpose was to plan the workshops that were happening that week. Sometimes Vicky gave an indication of the purpose of the meeting in an sms sent the night before. In January 2012 she began distributing an agenda at the start of some meetings (see example in Appendix V).

Silence in meetings could be interpreted as not knowing an answer to a question that has been posed, but could equally be thinking time in the absence of being able to

prepare a response. This affords the chairperson an advantage whereby knowledge over what will be discussed puts her in a more powerful position, having written the agenda and had time to research and articulate her argument. Others have to think on the spot, potentially constraining their ability to articulate their ideas. (This is compounded by 'initiation response evaluation' patterns of talk discussed later in the chapter).

- Everyone is expected to take notes. This was reinforced in several meetings this year where we were given a photocopy of a page from a diary titled 'meetings' to use for note taking. I emailed the minutes to Vicky each week but Nancy and Gemma don't have email addresses or computers at home, so I gave them paper copies in the next meeting, which was too late for them to use as a check list.

Minutes functioned as evidence of what had been brought up in previous meetings for Vicky to use to hold people to account. Minutes were proof that meetings had taken place that were filed in practitioners' monthly reports to funders (SARN). SARN impose structural constraints by insisting on the production of minutes, registers and photos from TWC meetings and workshops. This ritual of evidence collection reinforces discourses that equate accountability with written documents. These constraints are in turn entrenched by practitioners perpetuating, validating and ultimately strengthening the importance of this tradition in development organisations.

The above bullet pointed examples show how the meeting space can be seen as fundamental in the exercise of power (Foucault, 1979 in Cornwall, 2004, p. 80). Interactions between the practitioners in meetings are constrained by the meeting conventions (elaborated on in part 2 of this chapter) but concurrently enabled through the domination of space in the community centre. Panoptic power of funders operates through the monitoring of documents that are justified as necessary evidence in return for funding. This exchange maintains funders' authority over TWC, where practitioners legitimise SARN's power through compliance and not questioning the meeting rituals.

## **Workshops**

As explained in chapter 3, the function of workshops became largely one of cementing my relationship with practitioners, rather than evidence of how discourses function in

this setting. An account of two workshops can be found in Appendix VI to illustrate my experiences and what I used as a point of reference with practitioners in meetings and interviews. However, there is a point I would like to make concerning workshops that TWC are approached to facilitate on an ad hoc basis by organisations other than SARN.

TWC are approached to run workshops so that outside organisations can access people that they feel are likely to benefit. Practitioners are not always willing to do this. Vicky says that (organisation X) approached her to do a workshop on conflict, but she is refusing to do it unless it is 16 workshops 'because how can you address conflict in one workshop?' (Vicky's transcript, line 147). Even though Vicky's position is out of principle not an abuse of power, it still serves to position her as a gatekeeper and potentially means that people in the areas where TWC operate do not have an opportunity to attend a workshop on conflict. The decision that it can't be addressed in one session is decided on potential participants behalf, rather than allowing people to vote with their feet.

Outside agencies that want to run their own workshops may find access to venues denied. Asura recounts a time where a co-facilitator wanted to start a circle with people from Langa and booked the library in Delft. She reprimanded the librarian for allowing her to book the library for people who were not from Delft.

Now I'm using my powers now. You're not coming into my area to decide what you want to do, you are going to work with, through me (Asura's transcript, line 239).

This protectionist policy contributes to Asura's role in Delft as a gatekeeper (elaborated on later in this chapter), that not only constrains interactions with outsiders but also with other members of the women's circle who rely on her to encourage people to come to workshops.

## **Interviews**

The purpose of all of the interviews was to prompt practitioners to talk about interactions that said something about power relations (see chapter 3). Even though all of the women were asked the same questions to prompt this sort of discussion, to

some degree each took these questions and used them as an opportunity to pursue their own agenda and exercise agency.

Although it is often assumed that the interviewer dominates the interaction in research interviews (Kvale, 1996) I didn't find this to be the case. Aléx and Hammarström (2008) reflect on the power shift, interpreting comments made by one female interviewee about the interviewer's nationality, as conveying a message that the interviewee had access to a specific cultural capital that the interviewer lacked. From a Foucauldian understanding of power as subtle it is possible to see the balance shift 'after having been the one dominated and peppered with questions, she [the interviewee] recaptured a dominant position' (Aléx & Hammarström, 2008, p. 172). I found the transfer of power in the interviews firstly served to appropriate the interview as a public relations exercise, and an opportunity to direct the focus of my study, and secondly positioned me as a foreign outsider.

### **Power shifts and the interview as a public relations opportunity**

In an examination of what the reasons of the super rich were for taking part in interviews, Gilding (2010) found multiple contradictory motivations that shift during the course of an interview. Although my interviewees occupied an opposite class culture to those in Gilding's study, there are several similarities. All four of my interviewees were concerned with public relations or 'looking outward' (Gilding, 2010, p. 765) although the motivation behind this concern was slightly different in each interview.

Nancy repeats the phrase 'good relationship' nine times (lines 99, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 109, Nancy's transcript) when describing interactions between her and other practitioners and workshop participants. Her use of the language of positive reinforcement positions her as a public relations representative for TWC, rather than merely a practitioner. Gilding (2010) describes this as promoting a brand. Nancy goes on to share what she had said to me confidentially in the interview with other practitioners in a subsequent meeting. It felt as if perhaps she disclosed information to advertise her successful use of the interview as an opportunity to espouse the merits of working in TWC.

I felt the difference between what I expected Nancy to say, and what she actually recounted, created an air of tension. For example I expected her to talk about the

problem of people not arriving to workshops and she didn't. Our exchanges in the interview were strained compared to other interactions that we had shared, and compared to interviews with the other three practitioners. I was forced to concentrate my efforts on teasing out what I believed she really thought rather than being able to let the interaction flow more like a conversation. While I agree with Kvale in that the research interview is not a reciprocal interaction between two equal partners, I felt that the power dynamic was more pendulumlike than asymmetric (Kvale, 1996, p. 126).

Even when invited to talk about difficult relationships, Nancy avoids any criticism of TWC. When asked at the end of the interview if she would like to add anything, she uses this as an opportunity to say more positive things. This could be explained by her position on the TWC board, and a mistrust of how I may use what she tells me, pre-empting any negative spin that I could attach to accounts of unhelpful relationships (see question 5, Appendix III). My interview is set against a backdrop of 'communities fatigued by extractive academic researchers' (Alumasa, 2003, p. 11) a sentiment conveyed in Asura's interview. Nancy's refusal to repeat criticisms voiced in previous interactions with me is an effective method of exercising power over my research.

In contrast Gemma, having left the TWC by the time I interviewed her, is in a very different position. Gemma used the interview as an opportunity to reflect on her time with TWC and clarify the circumstances of her departure. She is keen to emphasise that she is 'fine' which she repeats several times to describe her current circumstances (Gemma's transcript, lines 56, 74, 80, 350, 369). I get the impression that she speaks with a wider audience in mind (probably the other TWC practitioners) than merely myself, with an outward orientation that justifies her role in the events leading up to her departure from TWC.

### **Power shifts in the interview and my status as an outsider**

Considering myself a feminist researcher, I tried to conduct the study in a non-oppressive manner, taking into account the thoughts and feelings of the participants. I attempted to establish supportive and non-hierarchical relationships with the women, as espoused by feminist researchers such as Oakley (1981) and Rose (1997). However, the following examples show that 'The 'woman-to-woman' interview cannot guarantee liberatory research (Phoenix, 1994 in Archer, 2002) as the women to varying extents still view me as a temporary, foreign researcher.

In the interview Gemma points out the things that I should pay attention to in my role as researcher. She attempts to direct my research to focus my efforts on the behaviour of the other practitioners, 'you must watch, just watch' (Gemma's transcript, lines 280, 282, 284, 286). Similarly Asura uses the interview as an opportunity to make me see her point of view and directs me to the questions that I should be concentrating on. She asked me 'Did it ever occur to you why we lose people?' (Asura's transcript, line 414) as if I have been asking the wrong questions in pursuit of the truth. Both Gemma and Asura allude to being able to see things that I can't see, or that in their view I haven't paid enough attention to, which marks out my position as researcher rather than colleague.

My status as an outsider looking in is further reinforced in the interview, when Asura explains why she was unhappy about times when I had gone to Delft without informing her. She supports her point with the high crime rate in Delft and the damage that would be done, not only to the reputation of TWC but to the whole of South Africa, if anything happened to me while in Delft. By likening damaging ramifications I could cause with the fallout from the Dewani case (Craven, 2010), she exerts power over my movements stipulating that I must tell her and the police whenever I come to the area (Asura's transcript, lines 117 and 142). By choosing Dewani over any other crime story, she picks the parts of my identity that reduce my power position to a foreign tourist, unfamiliar with the dangers of a township and dependent on others to protect me.

In reality the clash of aspects of interviewer and interviewee identity are not overcome by our common female identity of living in the global south and working for the same organisation. In Archer's (2002) study of the effect of race and gender, she found that young women argued that a white [older] man would have no shared knowledge or understandings and judge them as 'irrational or crazy' (Archer, 2002, p. 115). A similar fear of researchers not understanding comes through in Vicky's transcript when she reflects on what I may be mistakenly thinking. For example phrases such as 'I don't mean it as conceited' (Vicky's transcript, line 71) 'do you understand what I am saying?' (Vicky's transcript, line 136) 'somebody else would find it strange' (Vicky's

transcript, line 55), all allude to her consciousness of how as an outsider I may be incorrectly interpreting what I am being told.

Although after the interviews I regained power over how I interpreted what had been said during all of the interviews, I felt that the interviewees dominated the direction that the interview took. However it could be argued that this role reversal of traditional power relations was something that I allowed to happen, and so power ultimately still lay in my hands as an interviewer. Similarly by excusing participants' behaviour in interviews, Aléx and Hammarström (2008) point out that being aware of someone's lower status and accordingly behaving with extra tolerance (or in my case, not interrupting), can be a way of practicing power.

## **Part 2. Definition and explanation of dominant discourses**

### **Introduction**

In this section I explain each of the dominant discourses that I feel have played a significant part in positioning the practitioners as indicated by their language use.

These are:

- Development discourse
- Practitioner control discourse
- Western feminist discourse

Each is explained in-depth drawing on examples using quotes. In light of the criticisms of CDA that evidence of discourses can be weak (Billig & Schegloff, 1999), I have composed tables with more quotes to further support the existence of these discourses (These can be found in Appendices VII, VIII, IX, XII, XIII, XIV).

### **Development discourse**

By 'development discourses' I refer to a combination of theoretical perspectives founded in the writings of Paulo Freire (1970) and advocates of participatory approaches to development such as, but not exclusively, Robert Chambers (1995). REFLECT is an acronym for Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques. It 'fuses the theories of Paulo Freire with participatory methodologies developed for Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)' (SARN, 2010). The origins of this discourse are shaped by development literature, and grounded in terminology frequently chosen by practitioner in interactions within TWC. I chose 20



words that I identified as featuring in meetings, workshops and interviews from field notes and transcripts. I labelled these words as 'choice of language informed by development discourses.' These are terms such as 'session plan,' 'REFLECT methodology,' 'matrix,' and 'mapping,' many of which I hadn't come across before working with TWC (see column a, Appendix VII for the full list).

There emerges a notable departure from the development discourses in some interactions by some practitioners. I noticed that words associated with a traditional teacher-pupil relationship were being used instead of the language of development, indicating that some practitioners are conscious of alternative vocabulary, but choose when and when not to use it (Appendix VIII). By way of comparison I have added a column to offer alternative language that could have been used, for example 'lesson plan,' 'game,' and 'activity' (for a full list see column g, Appendix VII). These words have been defined as alternative language that could have been used informed by 'traditional classroom talk' (Thornberg, 2010, p. 492). For example in the interview Nancy, Gemma and Asura used both 'workshop' and 'class' to describe spaces where they facilitated workshops in Delft (see Appendix VII and VIII). They were comfortable to use language that conforms to development discourses interchangeably with 'traditional classroom talk.' It was only Vicky's transcript that made no reference to terms that veered from those used in development discourse. She was the only practitioner to describe participants as 'clients,' which I had never heard her say before the interview or since (see box 5c, Appendix VII). I now move on to explore how development discourse operates as a form of social control over practitioners' choice of vocabulary.

### **Power of development discourse over language**

Practitioners may feel under pressure to position their language within development discourses to demonstrate their commitment to 'bottom up' development programmes, espoused by their funders (SARN).

The language of development discourse is not part of everyday conversation and as a result constitutes a level of education about development. This knowledge has been acquired at training sessions run by SARN, that all the practitioners I interviewed had attended at least once. This knowledge of development literature written by theorists such as Freire, can be communicated through the use of language contained in books

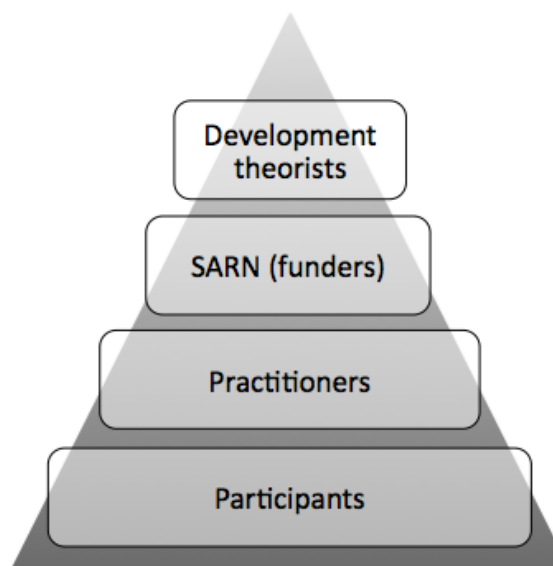
such as *Pedagogy of The Oppressed* (1970). This constitutes a form of elaborated code, a phrase cited in education research. The term refers to the more advanced vocabulary and language patterns grasped by students from the upper classes and teachers. These students have been observed as finding it easier to understand the teacher due to this shared mode of communication. As such upper class students find it easier to learn than lower class students, who are less likely use longer and more complex vocabulary (Bernstein & Solomon, 1999, p. 273). In the context of development, it means that as an outsider I have had to learn the language of development before I can begin to understand, which has slowed down my comprehension in a similar way to learning experiences of working class students.

The use of elaborated code could be interpreted as a form of social closure. Weber refers to this as the process of subordination whereby one group monopolises advantages, by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it (Murphy, 1986, pp. 22-23). This could be applied to contexts where those who do not understand the language of development are excluded from the conversations, because they do not understand what is being said. This method of exclusion can give speakers fluent in development discourses power over those who are not. This sanctional power (Giddens 1991) sets adherence to development terminology as a norm, and functions as a method of informal social control in the absence of anyone visibly monitoring the use of language. This is an illustration of Foucauldian panoptic power and the power of the knowledge of development theory, that positions people according to their fluency in development jargon.

For example I did not understand what was meant by the term 'tool' that was used frequently by Vicky in meetings when I first joined TWC. I wanted to use the word 'activity' instead, as that is what it seemed to me they were describing. I thought calling it a 'tool' was unnecessary and masked what it actually referred to; an activity used in a workshop. However I was constrained from voicing my opinion by the desire to seek acceptance from practitioners, and felt forced to keep quiet about my feelings. This is an example of sanctional power referred to by Giddens, where it was the threat of being reprimanded rather than being explicitly forbidden to express how I felt that controlled my behaviour. According to Freire (1973), my silence can be viewed as the product of top-down arrangements.

None of the practitioners challenged the use of development terminology. Hence 'the language of authority never governs without the collaboration of those it governs' (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 113). In the context of TWC as an institution, the practitioners and myself are complicit in giving SARN power through the reproduction of language contained in development discourses such as REFLECT. This supports Giddens' theory of power, namely that just because individuals conform, it does not mean that people are unaware that they are being constrained.

**Figure 3. Diagram to show the hierarchy within the field of development**



The above triangle shows the hierarchy of different groups, who use a development discourse to position themselves in a place of power above the group below. In keeping with a Giddens' understanding of power, this may be intentional or unintentional.

### **Development discourse positioning TWC practitioners as gatekeepers and agenda setters**

Due to REFLECT placing 'local community participation' at the heart of methods of empowerment, TWC practitioners' can use their status as local residents to justify steering development projects. For example, in weekly meetings lead by the chairperson that precede workshops, the following is decided:

- The focus of workshops (e.g. human rights, youth focal, crafts)
- Who is invited to workshops (e.g. youth, unemployed people)

- How long the workshops will run for (e.g. one off, over a series of weeks)
- Which external organisations will be engaged with and the terms of their involvement

These constitute a significant amount of decision-making that happens in the absence of, but on behalf of local participants. With no definition of who constitutes the local community in REFLECT literature, the practitioners are positioned as gatekeepers over who attends and set the agenda of workshops. Development discourse in this way enables practitioners, giving them power over key aspects of the development process.

The practitioners' ability to capitalise on features of development theory is in line with Foucault's theory of knowledge/power relations (Downing, 2008). Practitioners' knowledge of REFLECT and Freirean theory means they are able to exert power over how development happens. It is implicit that TWC must work in areas that are the most deprived, though what counts as deprived enough to warrant intervention through workshops is defined by the practitioners.

Delft has been targeted for interventions, though only Asura lives in the area. As a local resident she is given the title of co-ordinator in Delft, communicating her status as a well-connected community representative who knows what the community wants. Despite a population of 60,000 (Statistics South Africa, 2001) Asura insists that she knows what strategies work best in Delft to guarantee regular attendance at workshops. The potential workshop participants in Delft are assumed not to know the theory of participatory approaches, though Vicky accepts that they have heard development terminology because they have attended lots of workshops (field notes, line 266). The combination of practitioners' knowledge of development theory and the vagueness of who the community actually is, contributes to development practitioners' elevated status and legitimises their role as gatekeepers and agenda setters.

### **Practitioner Control Discourse (IRE discourse)**

My impression having conducted all the interviews was that there was a departure from terms associated with development discourses and instead, more vocabulary that could be described as 'traditional classroom talk.' However, when coding for this language, I realised that it was not as ubiquitous as I had first thought (see Appendix

VIII). I found that it wasn't the explicit language use giving the impression of a teacher-pupil relationship, but rather the interaction routines that had been learned in different settings. These had become so entrenched that I had begun to stop noticing and thought of it as natural (in line with Giddens' theory of reified power).

It wasn't until I read Thornberg (2010) that I recognised these routines as discourse observed in classrooms known as IRF or IRE exchanges. This is where the teacher initiates (I) an exchange through questioning the student or a class, who respond to the question (R), which is evaluated (E) or followed up (F) by the teacher (Giordan, 2003). This is relevant to power because classroom agendas have been observed as being controlled by IRE, which is sustained by a set of implicit rules dictated by the teacher. Besides empowering the teacher, IRE makes it difficult for teachers to listen to the thematic patterns of students, since most of what they say tends to fit into the thematic pattern set up by the teacher's initiation moves (Lemke, 1990 in Giordan, 2003).

### **IRE in meetings positioning participants in a 'practitioner control discourse'**

Meetings refer to times when development practitioners come together with the intention of planning workshops, via what could loosely be described as a discussion. However the distinct features of TWC meetings position practitioners in rigid roles that constrain their speech. In this section I will explain two such features, namely role allocation and verbal participation of meetings that illustrate this. I have used supporting evidence from the longest meeting that I attended on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011. This was one of 13 meetings that I observed from 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011 to 27<sup>th</sup> February 2012. I chose this meeting because I felt it was representative of the practitioner control discourse at work in interactions in all the meetings. This is followed by an explanation of how meeting norms can be used to transpose a 'pupil control discourse' (Thornberg, 2010) into a 'practitioner control discourse.' From the meeting notes I have identified the following themes as evidence of the existence of a practitioner control discourse, adapted from Thornberg's (2010) observations from classrooms and school council meetings.

- TWC members lack control compared to the chairperson
- The chairperson controls the meeting room and discourse is sustained by a set of implicit rules of meeting talk

- The chairperson maintains control over the agenda
- The chairperson has the mistaken belief that IRE encourages participation
- IRE places emphasis on the 'right' answers

While these features may be part of talk in many types of meetings, they can be used in different ways. For example the National Union of Tertiary Employees of South Africa (NUTESA) has strict rules about procedures in meetings such as the 'no business shall be dealt with unless a motion is duly seconded before the meeting' and 'the chairperson may prescribe a time limit for speakers on any topic' (NUTESA, 2012). These rules may constrain talk about things that haven't been put on the agenda ahead of time, but enable people to think about what they want to say in the knowledge that the agenda will be adhered to.

What is distinct in TWC meetings is that Vicky (chairperson) consciously wants an informal and participatory rather than a rigid structure, but seemingly unconsciously adheres to a top down meeting regime. In her interview she comes across as a reflexive practitioner stating the need to use your imagination to effectively communicate and disseminate information, so it is fully understood (Vicky's transcript, line 58). Due to the struggle to move beyond a verbal commitment to democratic meeting conventions, the experience of being in a meeting feels at odds with the participatory developmental approach that TWC theoretically subscribes to.

### **Features of TWC meetings: Role allocation**

In the interests of drawing contrasts between interviews, workshops and meetings, this section of analysis only includes myself and the four women that were interviewed, although other people at different times from within and outside TWC did attend meetings.

The dominant discourse in meetings can position meeting participants as either 'Chairperson' or 'TWC member' (see column b, Appendix IX). I do not mean to imply that there is equality between Nancy, Gemma, Asura and myself in sharing a label, so I have included the assorted positions that each person occupies to clarify the differences (see column d, Appendix IX). However these differences do not appear to change the way that discourse functions, and the acts that are performed as part of

being a TWC member apply to all of us regardless of our position. I was not exempt from being positioned like a pupil because of my status as a researcher.

The role of chair was never rotated in the six months of meetings that I participated in. Although there were acts carried out in some meetings and not others, I have only included those that happened at least once in every meeting in this table (see column e, Appendix IX). In likening TWC members with pupils I do not mean to be derogatory or depict them as childlike. I only choose this term to demonstrate parallels, positioning myself and research participants within an alternative version of a 'pupil control discourse' (Thornberg, 2010), where the role of teacher can be substituted with the chairperson (Vicky) and pupils for TWC members (Nancy, Gemma, Asura and I).

### **Features of TWC meetings: verbal participation**

There is an emphasis on the 'right' answers rather than deliberative dialogue (Thornberg, 2010). This is evidenced from the way Vicky may repeat a question until she is satisfied with the answer. For example, on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011, Vicky (Chairperson) says she wants help planning a workshop that she is facilitating that week. Specifically she wants help to formulate an appropriate question to begin the session using the 'tree tool' (see Appendix X) that she explains to me in detail. The conversation begins with Vicky posing the question.

'We want to start a youth desk in Delft and Elsie's River. So the question would be, what would youth want from a youth desk? Would you also say that would be the question, what services would be offered?' (field notes, line 592).

Vicky refers to the same point about how the question should be phrased a further eight times (see Appendix XI). This IRE discourse positions Vicky as the person who knows whether TWC members' answers are correct or not. Repetition of the same question conveys that we have not yet given a satisfactory response.

Vicky's repeated request to not 'just agree,' to 'pick her brains' and that we 'must help her' (Appendix XI) shows a verbal commitment to inviting others to voice their ideas and comments, positioning her as democratic rather than controlling. These sentiments are undermined when alternative views are countered by her telling us again what she wants the aim of the session to be. This implies that her re-phrasing

the question or wording of the situation that she wants us to think about slightly differently, is a euphemism for 'no that is not the right answer' or 'no that isn't what I want to do,' which discretely overrules our suggestions. This attests to the subtle way that power operates outlined in Foucault and Giddens where overt force is not necessary for an individual to retain authority over others and gain compliance from them.

Suggestions are constrained to those that help Vicky phrase the question she wants to ask using the 'tree tool' (see Appendix X) rather than alternative methods. This is an unspoken constraint imposed by the REFLECT ideology that is reproduced at meetings. As such, practitioners stop challenging the REFLECT method, especially as their funding from SARN depends on them using it. This is explicitly conveyed later in the meeting when Vicky addresses Gemma.

When you are doing the planning you must do it in the REFLECT way. She [Vicky] says that Gemma needs to become more structured (field notes, line 763).

In instances like these, democracy is undermined by organisational structures and rules (Thornberg, 2010). The lack of continuity from meeting to meeting makes it difficult to say the 'right' thing. The following extract (Quote a) is from a meeting where Vicky talks about an event she organised as part of the 16 days of activism in 2011. Vicky draws attention to Gemma not bringing people from her own circle (a 'circle' refers to participants attending workshops facilitated by practitioners in their local area).

Quote a. There were no people from your circle. You had (practitioner V's) people, you had that people, you had that people and when we look, no wait let me talk [then] you can talk. When we look at the attendance register, then what do we see? All the people that came from Bokmakierie, besides (practitioner Y) and them, which are the usual suspects, are down as different organisations. Am I right? [pause] Am I right? (field notes, line 630).



Later in the same meeting Vicky explains why people cannot run circles in the area where they live, hence the need to start circles in other areas instead.

Quote b. People do not respond well to people that they do not know – that they do know. Because they think that they cannot learn from people that they know. So we need to ensure that it's people from other communities that come in. Because if I sent (Trainee 1) into Statice, are they going to give her the respect that is due to her? Those are all the things we need to consider. I would like your thoughts on that Gemma (field notes, line 637).

In Quote b Vicky argues the opposite to the case she makes in Quote a above. The 'practitioner control discourse,' positions Gemma to give the 'right' response under the pressure of an audience, and it becomes difficult for her to get the answer 'correct' given Vicky's contradictory stance.

At no point has anyone asked for a break or how long the meeting will continue for. The practitioner control discourse positions us to not question Vicky, accept that there is no agenda other than what Vicky decides, and that meetings end whenever Vicky says so. This is in spite of Vicky expressly stating 'And I know I talk a lot, and that is why sometimes you need to stop me and say 'stop!' (field notes, line 719). But in all the meetings I have observed no one, myself included, has ever asked her to stop talking. This could be perceived as discursive power (Foucault, 1981) where we accept the rules, values and ways of thinking that are associated with a social situation. This is not because Vicky has persuaded us to accept her dominance, in fact she verbally dissuades us from doing so. Despite this, the way the meetings discourse and IRE operates, means challenging her dominance is either immediately ruled out or doesn't enter our minds. Ultimately IRE in meetings contributes to a disjuncture between words and actions.

### **Slippage between words and actions in other settings**

In addition to meetings there was evidence of discourses positioning practitioners in hierarchical relationships in other settings. Again the dominance of practitioners occurred despite a verbal commitment to equal power relations, as advocated by SARN and REFLECT. For example, Asura starts her workshop in Delft by explaining that any one of them could be the facilitator and explains that it is not about her

teaching them (field notes, line 1029). Asura proceeded to teach the group about REFLECT and asked them to take notes.

In the interview Vicky comments that she often finds that information she has given to people in meetings hasn't been understood, 'And it also makes me question my role in the way that I, that I do things' (Vicky's transcript, line 40). This commitment to evaluating how she does things has not seemed to move beyond words and into actually changing the meeting rituals. She continues to rely on a practitioner control discourse that positions people into a hierarchy with her at the top. While accepting that this may not be the best way to increase understanding among practitioners and workshop participants, current discourses remain entrenched and in turn make alternative ways of thinking less likely. A development discourse permeates language but is not practiced in meetings. Thus participatory and democratic discourses are reserved for domains outside the context of meetings.

The practitioner control discourse is replicated in interviews where people explain the role of voice. For example when asked to talk about a time when she felt powerful, Nancy cited the training sessions that she attended at SARN, then commented 'I like it when someone gives me a chance to talk' (Nancy's transcript, line 63). This implies IRE discourse positions her as waiting to be asked a question or prompted to contribute an idea, rather than being entitled to speak when she likes, as would be implied by alternative phrasing such as 'I like it when I talk' or 'I like talking.'

### **Western feminist discourse**

Western feminist discourse is used by Mohanty (2003) to describe the way that Western feminist activists and authors position themselves in relation to non-Western women. By Western feminism she is referring to liberal feminist principles associated with a women in development (WID) approach to change (see chapter 2).

'By assuming women as a coherent already constituted group, that is placed in kinship, legal and other structures, defines Third World women as subjects outside social relations, instead of looking at the way women are constituted through these very structures' (Mohanty, 2003, p. 40)

Although Mohanty is directing her criticism at Western women such as myself, she accepts that her arguments about presuppositions or implicit principles holds for anyone who uses these methods including Third World women living in developing countries (Mohanty, 2003, p. 21). The elements of her criticisms that I have focussed on to define a Western feminist discourse are those that concern development and that have the most supporting evidence from observations and interviews. These are:

- The assumption that development is synonymous with economic development
- Talk of 'needs' and 'problems' but few choices
- Women are assumed to be a coherent group or category prior to entry into development

The following sections take each of these elements and apply them to the narratives in meetings, workshops and interviews, which collectively constitute the work of a Western feminist discourse.

**Western feminist discourse positioning actors as assuming development is synonymous with economic development.**

A common theme in observations and interviews was an implicit acceptance of the current capitalist economic system. Interactions remained in the paradigm of free market competition and the minimum role of the state in providing services. The implied aims of workshops were to equip people with an ability to navigate the limited government provisions of health and education, rather than challenge it. Any pressure put on the government by development projects designed by practitioners, were projects that were part of government initiatives, such as the '16 Days of Activism.' (This is a state sponsored annual event aiming to raise awareness of gender inequality, not to radically challenge capitalist structures that contribute to the oppression of women). The onus was placed on participants to better adapt to the demands of capitalism by making themselves more marketable and producing goods to sell for a profit. In this way development workshops and the language of the practitioners in different settings were informed by theories of economic development, which was assumed to lead to better standards of living.

The practitioners' preoccupation with encouraging participants to sell labour or goods could be interpreted as conforming to Gramsci's (1971) theories of the workings of hegemonic discourse, by perpetuating exploitative capitalist power relations. However, I don't think the intention of development practitioners was to entrench exploitative practices that benefit the rich. Practitioners' conformity to the status quo fits more with discursive power where alternatives to capitalism and job creation seem impossible, especially in the face of people's overt need for money. Although Vicky mentioned helping women to form co-ops, which may be seen as an alternative to competitive capitalist systems, it is still a business model that places value on maximising profit. The discourse works to place structural constraints (Giddens, 1984) on the practitioners where working within the capitalist structure becomes reified and natural, which inadvertently contributes to the continued domination of the rich over the poor.

In her interview Gemma claims that stipends paid to development practitioners to facilitate workshops were 'dropped' resulting in development practitioners leaving TWC. This had consequences for practitioners who lost a source of income, and participants who could no longer attend workshops due to the absence of a practitioner to run the workshop. Gemma likens the crafts that participants made at workshops to food, focussing solely on the economic aspect of the experience.

'They were desperate because it was like a piece of bread for them. They can make it and they can sell it. It's like a piece of bread you can put on the table.'  
(Gemma's transcript, line 163)

The withdrawal of workshops could have been framed in other ways influenced by other ideologies. For example Gemma could have lamented the loss of interaction between participants and practitioners, the absence of a space for participants to talk freely, or losing an opportunity to challenge capitalism. Instead the material gains of the workshop are picked out as the most adverse effect on practitioners' and participants' lives, from the absence of workshops. Gemma's use of language communicates her acceptance of the free market where people must sell what they make. This conforms to the WID approach that tends to focus on 'income generating activities where women are taught a skill or craft and sometimes organised into market co-operatives' (Rathgeber, 1990, p. 492). This could indicate that capitalism has

become reified and workshops that do not generate income are automatically judged as inferior.

At no point do any of the practitioners view crafts made in TWC workshops as a piece of art, a representation of the person who made it or something sacred to be kept. The aim of craft workshops is to make things that will appeal to buyers, so that participants can generate profit. The art and craft skills that the practitioners and participants learn are motivated by money, and this assumption is perpetuated through the language used in interviews and meetings (summarised in Appendix XII).

This ties in with Kothari's argument that individuals are participating in development projects at the expense of encouraging people to challenge prevailing hierarchies and inequalities in society. Development can therefore lead to inclusionary control and inducement of conformity (Kothari, 2001, p. 143). These points are supported by the absence of practitioners' talk of the role capitalism plays in bringing about inequality and poverty. REFLECT, development discourses and Western feminist discourses reinforced acceptance of the current political economy, and ways of working within capitalism rather than ways of dismantling it.

Development projects have been criticised by GAD for generalising about women's experiences and failing to incorporate a more pluralistic view of feminist ideologies, with less emphasis on economic empowerment. This demonstrates Giddens' (1984) duality of structure where individuals and society simultaneously exert power over the other. This applies to practitioners' individual actions that contribute to reinforcing capitalist systems in society through development projects. At the same time the capitalist structure of society constrains individuals to only conceive of development projects that conform to capitalist systems, entrenching them further.

### **Western feminist discourse positioning actors as lacking choice.**

Mohanty (2003) criticises the way Western feminist discourses position third world women as lacking agency. Women are framed as having 'needs' and 'problems' but few choices. This positions third world women as a relatively powerless group, particularly in comparison to Western outsiders. Alternative ways of narrating the decisions that are made by people could be to use the language of 'choice' or 'agency.' I have only included texts from interviews that could have been framed using

the language of choice and have included these alternatives in columns c, e and g (see Appendix XIII). For example, when I asked Vicky why Asura refused to sit down in one of the meetings, Vicky uses this Western feminist discourse that positions Asura as having little power over her actions.

‘But where you think of where Asura comes from and, and in her own space, one would um, sort of understand that maybe that is the way of, she needs to assert herself in a certain way’ (Vicky’s transcript, line 22).

Alternative ways to phrase this could extend Asura more power over her actions. For example, ‘she chooses to assert herself’ which acknowledges the active decision making process that is available to her, rather than referencing where she comes from (Delft) as determining what she needs to do. This implicitly assumes that Vicky is not constrained by where she comes from, inferring that either she does not need to assert herself in a certain way, or she chooses to wield power in a more enlightened manner, rather than being dictated to by where she comes from. The discourse here positions Vicky as superior in that she is in a privileged position where she does not have to bow to such needs, in a similar way to how Mohanty (2003) describes Western feminists as assuming a more enlightened position above third world women.

### **Women are assumed to be a coherent group or category prior to entry into development**

Mohanty (2003) criticises the way that Western feminists often treat third world women as a homogenous group, typically categorising them as poor, family orientated, not conscious of their rights, illiterate and domestic (Mohanty, 2003, p. 40). Western women in contrast do not see themselves as such. While I would not go as far as to say that all the interactions I observed were informed by this degree of homogeneity (see Appendix XIV), there was a tendency for this discourse to place the practitioners in a superior position to each other at different times, and towards the participants in workshops.

Quote c: ‘No they go for the sandwich and the cup of tea, because if I’m hungry I’ll sit there for an hour or whatever. And if I’m going to get tea and lunch and afternoon tea, of course I’m going to sit there, I have no food in my house’ (Vicky’s transcript, line 155).

It is without dispute that there are high levels of poverty and unemployment in Delft (Seekings et al., 2010). However, the assumptions made about the motivation behind women's attendance to workshops being based on access to food infiltrates the way that power works in meetings and workshops.

The discourse of female participants as poor and predominantly motivated by hunger, conversely positions the practitioners as relatively privileged. This is not necessarily the case as from interviewing Asura and Gemma in their homes, they do not appear to be significantly more financially comfortable. To some extent all four participants continue to frame their interactions with workshop participants, as one that is underpinned by participants' ongoing experience of absolute poverty. This is consistent with Giddens' description of material constraints.

This works paradoxically with claims in the interview with Vicky and Nancy that they are similar to the participants. Vicky (see Quote c above) begins to speak in the first person as an indication of the similarity in thought process between her and participants in Delft. Nancy explicitly claims 'we are all the same' (Nancy's transcript, line 147). This verbal commitment to equality is undermined by a dominant 'Western feminist discourse' that could be seen as somewhat positioning the women that attend workshops as victims lacking agency.

Solutions to problems and needs in the community are assumed to be found in the training of women field workers and encouraging women's co-operation (Mohanty, 2003, p. 40). This feeds into a Western feminist discourse where women are a coherent group with knowledge of their community and an overwhelming desire to be part of local development. This is evidenced by recruitment drives that were discussed in meetings (field notes, line 736), where workshop participants should be chosen by practitioners to attend SARN training to become TWC facilitators. Due to the power relationship between the funder and TWC, other alternative strategies to development that do not use REFLECT or field workers are not considered.

The assumption is that all women have the potential to become REFLECT practitioners. Even though Vicky accepts this is not realistic, she explains her view by

grouping all women together. The choice of language when referring to women's participation lacks nuance implying that women are all the same, 'carrying a heavy load on their shoulders in terms of meeting their obligations towards family,' (Vicky's transcript, line 97). When considering participation of women, there is an absence of phrasing in language use that acknowledges diversity among women. By prefacing statements with 'some women,' or 'perhaps some women' or 'some women may' the speaker infers that this may or may not be the case. In contrast, TWC practitioners often speak with certainty and justify this mode of speech in terms of their ability to empathise with the lived experiences of other women (see Quote d below). Knowledge is supported through reference to having themselves been poor or because they live in poorer parts of Cape Town.

Quote d: 'So because I have the experience, because I have experience of what each woman is experiencing and still experiencing. I understand the relevance, I understand what is relevant' (Vicky's transcript, line 74).

Practitioners' understanding of what is and is not relevant to women through shared experiences provides a starting point to the process of development that in some way enables interactions. A Western feminist discourse which assumes homogeneity by virtue of being a poor woman, may equally limit TWC practitioners' interactions. Workshop participants who are not aspiring REFLECT practitioners with no desire to join TWC may feel alienated. This may prevent participants from benefiting from being part of an alleged homogenous group of women who can empathise with each other. The absence of conversations around intersectionality (Collins, 2000) serves to understate 'the diversity among popular organizations and their ideas about development alternatives' (Bebbington & Bebbington, 2001, p. 7).

## **Conclusion**

To conclude this chapter, discourses at work in different settings serve to both enable and constrain the way development practitioners view workshops and workshop participants. These discourses appear predominantly through language choice, which plays a central role in delineating knowledge of development theory that ranks practitioners within TWC. Despite the intentions of development practitioners to empower others, they may in fact be unintentionally cementing hierarchical relationships and value systems that ultimately perpetuate inequality.



## **Chapter 5 Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

In this section I draw together the dominant discourses and themes explored throughout this enquiry. I have used the sub questions (stated in chapter 3) and overall research question to group together concluding summaries. This is followed by a reflection of the study in relation to implications and areas for future research, with an evaluation of the methods used.

### **Sub questions**

#### **1) What discourses inform practitioners' interactions and how do interactions inform discourses?**

Practitioners' interactions are informed by multiple discourses that compete against one another depending on the setting and audience. These are indicated through language and non-verbal communication. For example, if a practitioner stands silently in front of rows of participants, it indicates assumptions about how best to start a workshop. Sitting in a circle with participants' means the practitioner is positioned within a different pedagogy.

#### **Development discourse vs traditional classroom talk**

There is a degree of tension between development discourses and traditional classroom discourses. Terms used in REFLECT literature compete against those associated with traditional classroom talk. Fluency in participatory development phraseology between 'facilitator' and 'client' is seen as superior to hierarchical classroom relationships between 'teacher' and 'student.' TWC practitioners recognise participatory development ideology as one employed by people in positions of power, such as funders SARN and development theorists. TWC practitioners reproduced the development discourse in meetings, workshops and in the interview with me.

#### **Practitioner control discourse vs REFLECT ideology**

The power of development practitioners manifests in a practitioner control discourse, where roles are assumed in interactions based on an 'initiation, response, evaluation' (IRE) conversation structure. This is evident in discussions between practitioners in meetings, talk referring to participants outside workshops, and in interactions between practitioners and participants in workshops. This more controlling style of conducting meetings and workshops infers that there is a right and a wrong answer, which

contradicts the democratic 'bottom-up' arrangements espoused by REFLECT that TWC theoretically advocate.

### **Western feminist discourse vs critical feminism**

The agency of TWC practitioners is understood within a Western feminist discourse that tends to view participants as the 'other'. This is in keeping with a Women in Development (WID) or Women and Development (WAD) approach to change (see chapter 2). Participants are grouped together predominantly according to the area that they live in and the level of poverty associated with this area. This feeds the assumption that development interventions should aim to assist people in earning an income, either through making things to sell or accessing work offered by employers. The discourse focuses on poverty, unemployment, drugs, gangsterism, and lack of food, drawing practitioners' attention to the 'problems' and 'needs' of the communities, rather than framing issues as 'choices'.

### **2) What role do discourses play in their interactions and what role do interactions play in shaping discourses?**

The multiple discourses work to affirm and entrench hierarchy by placing practitioners, participants and myself as researcher into distinct roles. IRE, modelled in meetings is replicated in workshops, which silences individuals who do not want to get the answer wrong. Knowledge of the conventions of the REFLECT model of development, particularly key terms and tools, places authors such as Freire and Chambers at the top of the development ladder, followed by funders, practitioners and workshop participants. Only by embracing development discourses can an individual begin to use the language of development, to demonstrate their potential to climb the ladder. Development discourses dominate practitioners' interactions making classroom talk such as 'teaching' inferior to the REFLECT term 'facilitating.'

Development discourse's heavy emphasis on local community participation can position development practitioners as gatekeepers and agenda setters. TWC practitioners control the aims of workshops and who is encouraged to attend. When approached by outside agencies to run workshops on their behalf, practitioners can accept or reject them, which enables or constrains outsiders' access to perspective participants. Practitioners' knowledge and command of the language of development and REFLECT gives TWC status collectively, and individual power to determine who is

most in need and what the important issues are in the communities that they choose to work in. This feeds into traditional classroom power dynamics that contradict Freirean pedagogy.

The emphasis that is placed on economic development as a solution to the needs of a homogenous community combine to compose a Western feminist discourse, which is in line with WID development strategies of the 1980's. Free market economics constrains the thinking of practitioners to design workshops using PRA tools with a long-term view to enhancing women's competitiveness and employability in the job market. The need for food is seen as the primary concern of workshops that are dominated by hungry women with hungry families to feed. As pointed out by Escobar (1995, p. 177), while it is important to maintain awareness of the suffering of women, it is important to resist concluding that women are helpless victims and that what they need is development.

Development discourse, IRE discourse and a Western feminist discourse all contribute to a selective process of whose voices and views are heard and given recognition. Competing discourses operate in interactions between TWC practitioners and workshop participants, and development practitioners outside TWC. These multiple discourses result in limiting opportunities for constructive criticism in meetings and workshops. The interview situation was an opportunity to re-affirm the successes of the REFLECT approach to development, but also to demonstrate how it had empowered the practitioners, effectively giving them carte blanche to co-ordinate development initiatives in a way that they saw fit.

One of the TWC practitioners was situated in Delft, the area from which potential workshop participants are drawn. The other three live in other previously disadvantaged areas of Cape Town. This means all four women (to varying degrees) may be able to empathise with the lived experiences of participants who attend workshops. Due to practitioners' local and experiential knowledge, the development discourse and REFLECT ideology posits them as local experts. This expertise is communicated using the language of development that is acquired in facilitator training workshops run by funders.

Development discourse perpetuates itself through the language of development and justifies the power of TWC practitioners. Through words such as 'participation' and 'local facilitators,' development discourse conceals hierarchical power positions allocated according to how well the language of REFLECT is grasped and communicated. For example by choosing to describe interactions in development settings to happen between 'facilitators' and 'clients', power relations are assumed to be more equal than if alternative words like 'teacher' and 'student' were favoured. This is compounded due to pressure from funders who request reports that use this language.

Development discourses and IRE in meetings position me as an outsider. Being unfamiliar with the language of development and from 'the west' prevents me from gaining the status of a local, which remains practitioners' territory. I could only enter development settings by appointment and with their permission, remaining in the company of practitioners whenever possible.

Use of a Western feminist discourse means that practitioners think of development primarily in economic terms. While the aims of sessions and REFLECT may be to empower, this is framed in the context of improving people's ability to find work. Although participatory tools are advocated to explore local issues, in meetings TWC practitioners see the problems of unemployment and lack of food as the key stumbling blocks, that have to be factored in to any development intervention. This causes tension between the discourse of development and Western feminist discourse, as REFLECT is an approach that assumes people are at workshops of their own choosing, not solely to access food.

'I know the REFLECT says not to do that but the REFLECT needs to know that the people, I've got the knowledge, I've got everything, so sit there without food in the house. Nobody knows what goes on in a person's house. It's you yourself that need to go out, motivate yourself, but at the end of the day you still need to go and give, and say to your kids, like here's, here's food' (Asura's transcript, line 53).

The underlying theme of any workshop then becomes to make participants more able to fit into the current capitalist system, rather than to challenge and question capitalisms' role in polarising society. While it is arguably unrealistic for four development practitioners to begin an anti-capitalist social movement, their interactions in workshops seem to lack a political dimension. Teaching craft skills so that women can sell items to buy food for their family doesn't feel steeped in the ideologies of Gramsci and Freire (Mayo, 1999), that partly underpin REFLECT. It's important to add though, that TWC practitioners are radical in the sense that they are prepared to confront issues by working in parts of Cape Town that are associated with violent conflict. For example TWC have had to stop workshops on gangsterism in Hanover Park, due to the risks posed to their personal safety.

**Overall conclusion: How do discourses enable and constrain the power of development practitioners in interactions within The Women's Circle?**

The way discourses enable and constrain development practitioners depends on how enable and constrain is defined, which in this study has been primarily through Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration. As such practitioners may be aware or unaware of the work of discourses and that they simultaneously enable and constrain, leading to both intended and unintended consequences.

Practitioners reproduce discourses that conform to capitalist values, which further entrenches economic systems designed to create disparity. The unintended consequence is that conformity is internalised and practitioners do not suggest alternatives to the current economic paradigm in South Africa. Development is epitomised as capacitating others to generate an income to the extent that hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) discourses become reified (Giddens, 1984). This may enable practitioners to attract Western capitalist funders such as SARN, but structural constraints (Giddens, 1984) may limit their power to change underlying exploitative relationships in society.

Discursive power (Foucault, 1981) silences practitioners and others that they interact with. Development discourse positions alternatives to workshops and REFLECT tools as deviant. Practitioners either knowingly or unknowingly impose sanctions (Giddens, 1984) in interactions via practitioners' surveillance of communication (Foucault), which

acts as a subtle form of informal social control. The implicit threat of being excluded or marginalised constrains language to that which conforms to REFLECT terminology and methods. People who do not conform or question REFLECT are liable to be positioned as outsiders. This may limit practitioners' audience to those that subscribe or convert to REFLECT methods of development. This may enable a shared sense of identity among individuals within TWC, but practitioners who do not see the value in REFLECT or the associated terminology may feel distanced and without a voice.

Sanctions and structure (Giddens, 1984) constrain the power of practitioners to debunk or relativise (Mills, 1959 cited in Graaff, 2001) dominant discourses. From the empirical evidence in this study, I conclude that discursive forces are less an enabler and more a constraint on TWC practitioners' power to effect change. The unintended consequence is the appropriation of Freirean methods to sustain the legitimacy of dominant discourses.

### **Some implications for further research**

This research could be used to support the case that participatory approaches to development do not always address power relations by nature of their design. The theory of development models such as REFLECT are interpreted differently in each development project and depend heavily on the relationship that practitioners have with participants. This view was aired by Ton Dietz (2012) from research into how people in Ghana felt about development projects over the past 30 years.

If development projects heavily depend on the nature of interactions rather than the theoretical approach, then perhaps future research should focus on the quality of relationships between development practitioners and participants more often. For example, perhaps a project succeeds not because it uses REFLECT, but because the practitioner communicated and interacted with the people that they worked with in a way that enabled them to forge meaningful relationships.

Development theorists and academics, in engineering theories to improve people's lives, may need to re-think their place in the power structure and their role in shaping power relations. Writing about development using terminology that is not part of most people's vocabulary, particularly if English is an additional language, gives the speakers of these words status and positions them above others. This may constrain

the ease with which people involved in development build more equal relationships with one another. Further research could be conducted into the role of language in shaping power relations in development settings.

This study brings into question the authenticity of interviews if used as a stand-alone research tool to investigate development organisations. The pressure to project a positive image (especially in light of competition for funding) is difficult to sweep aside as an outsider, and it is difficult to realistically guarantee anonymity in small organisations. I would advocate spending time with development workers before interviewing them and trying to give back to the organisation in some form. This may go some way to stemming the understandable tide of apathy towards university students, especially in over-researched geographical and subject areas.

Despite feeling like a foreign tourist for much of my time during this research, and the limitations that this brings, I feel I have been able to use it to my advantage to question the interactions that 'insiders' may have become blind to. Furthermore as Visser (2000, p. 19) points out, 'overseas researchers should conduct research in the Third World. I say this, however, not only because this might be part of the "blurring of the distinction" between the First World "us" and Third World "them" but it might, ironically seen against the current geographical debates, aid the blurring of the distinction between "us(es)" and "them(s)" internal to some transforming Third World societies too.'

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# **Appendices**

## **Appendix I: Memorandum of Understanding**

Between: University of Cape Town through UCT Knowledge Co-op  
(UCT)

And: The Women's Circle (Not a legal entity)  
(TWC)

(Hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Parties" and individually as the "Party")

### **Nature of the Partnership**

The use of the term "Partner" in this agreement is not intended in a way that implies the creation of a legal partnership, joint venture or any other kind of legal entity between UCT and TWC in order to implement the proposed Project. It is rather used to express a partnership in which both members have equal status.

The parties are entering into this MOU on the basis that we are equal partners who bring different and yet complementary strengths to the tasks of:

- Collaborating in the delivery of and reflection on human rights workshops delivered by TWC using Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) tools and other strategies.

The two organisations commit themselves to the common goal of jointly delivering to the highest level of quality. Their relationship in implementing this project, to delivery human rights workshops, will be underpinned by principles of transparency and trust.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Partners for the project**

Within this project, both partners will work within the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) established for the project.

With the support of TWC, Teresa Perez under the academic supervision of Dr Johann Graaff will conduct research to use in her thesis, to submit as part of accreditation for a



Masters in Sociology. The broad aim of the study is to investigate the experiences of development practitioners working with TWC.

As part of this she will:

- Carry out semi structured interviews at a time and place that is convenient for the women involved.
- Attend weekly planning meetings and workshops as requested.
- Further research activities may emerge – in that case the MoU may be adapted.

A part of this study TWC will:

- Inform Teresa Perez of meeting times and allow access to planning meetings and workshop sessions.
- Indicate when feedback and input is welcome.

In exchange for access to TWC development practitioners, Teresa Perez will

- Perform voluntary work with TWC, attend all planning sessions and workshops when required by TWC co-ordinator.
- Give constructive feedback to TWC about the workshops and suggest tools of how to develop them further when requested to.
- Take an active part in planning sessions drawing on previous experience of teaching human rights in the UK, when called on to do so.
- To be a reliable, punctual and trustworthy member of the team.

UCT will introduce the two parties to each other and mediate the process and agreement between them.

**Duration:**

The project will start in September 2011 and end by March 2012.

**Confidentiality and disclosure of information**

Neither party nor their respective employees, consultants or agents shall disclose, use or make public, any information or material acquired or produced in connection with, or by the performance of, this MOU, other than in the performance of their respective

obligations under this MOU, or as required by law, without the prior written approval of the other party, which must not be unreasonably withheld.

The parties intend that the provisions of this clause shall be binding on them and shall survive the termination or expiration of this MOU.

**The Parties agree that any person interviewed during the course of the Project will be advised of the nature and consequences of the Project and will thereafter complete and sign the informed consent form before any interviews commence.**

#### **Dispute Resolution/Arbitration**

**Any dispute, arising from, or in connection with this agreement shall first be resolved by the parties through the process of negotiation or mediation and if the dispute cannot be resolved, then the dispute shall be referred to the Arbitration Foundation of South Africa to be resolved.**

THUS DONE AND SIGNED AT \_\_\_\_\_ ON THIS \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2011.

#### **As witnesses:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
For and on behalf of the  
University of Cape Town

THUS DONE AND SIGNED AT \_\_\_\_\_ ON THIS \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2011.

#### **As witnesses:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
For and on behalf of The  
Women's Circle

THUS DONE AND SIGNED AT \_\_\_\_\_ ON THIS \_\_\_\_\_  
DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2011.

**As witnesses:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

University of Cape Town

## **Appendix II: Extracts from field notes**

The following extracts are from my field note journal that I kept throughout the research process. The numbered bullet points are referred to throughout this study as line numbers (e.g. field notes, line 20). To protect the identity of the four practitioners that I interviewed, I have not included my full field note journal (this is available on request). Instead this extract serves to give an indication of the style in which notes were taken to give an indication of the level of detail that I recorded in meetings.

### **20th September sms**

65. Hi just to inform u next week is off as everyone is attending a weeklong REFLECT refresher training we will resume the wk thereafter thanks V

66. o.k Will come along on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October for the planning session.

### **30th September sms**

67. Hi! Is it back to normal next week? Monday at (location X) at 12am for planning session and Delft on Tuesday. Teresa

68. Hi I need to meet with everyone as Gemma was robbed at gunpoint last week will let u know

### **3rd October sms**

69. Hi let me know if I should go to (location X) today. Teresa

70. Hi there I am mtng with the ladies tom will let u know whats happening regards Vicky

71. O.k Would it be alright to come along and sit in on the meeting? I would like to ask (Trainee 2) and (Trainee 1) if they would be willing to take part in some research, if that's O.k with you? I can explain more when I see you.

72. Sure yet only Nancy and sethu will b present 12pm (location X)

73. Perfect. See you tomorrow at 12pm.

### **4th October 2011 meeting at (location x) community centre**

74. The bus from Obs came early so I arrived at about 11.45am, but Vicky was arriving at the same time and when went to the meeting room, three ladies were waiting. I don't know if Vicky had deliberately told me to be there at 12am rather than 11.30,

which was the time that everyone else put on the register as if that was when the meeting was suppose to have started. Equally it may be that everyone was early and so the meeting began without any reference to the time.

75. I was introduced to Gemma who I hadn't met before who runs the art and craft groups. Everyone got out a pad of paper and Nancy took minutes of the meeting, which made my note taking less conspicuous. I had considered taking along a tape recorder but thought it rather premature as I hadn't formally asked anyone to be part of research, only suggested at our first meeting. I took notes as if I was taking minutes too.

### **Meeting notes**

76. Vicky asks for feedback about the previous week's REFLECT training that had been held at the hall by representatives from SARN. Gemma speaks in Afrikaans and then Vicky translates. She found it useful and although there were things that she already knew, it helped to embed these things further and added clarity. Nancy agreed, they both spoke about baseline clustering.

77. Vicky asks if they feel that they put too much pressure on themselves sometimes and make it more complicated than it needs to be (reference to delivering of workshops using REFLECT methodology). Nancy agrees and says that the session plans can be more a source of stress than helpful. Vicky explains that this is why she says that REFLECT is an approach rather than a method that they should stick rigidly to.

78. SARN advocates that volunteers within their own community should set up women's circles. Vicky argues that this is a lot to take on, especially in communities where people are faced with many social problems such as drugs and crime. They only get R50,000 a year which isn't very much ( I don't know whether this is in Cape Town or for each project area). Vicky uses money from this budget to pay for the arts and craft groups that Gemma runs even though strictly speaking she isn't using REFLECT. She describes this as 'taking from Peter to pay Paul.'

79. Draw up a to do list

80. Proposal writing workshop

81. Session planning workshop

82. Workshop design with toolkit
83. Work on pamphlets
84. Planning for 16 days of activism, 1,000 people to march, need a banner and pamphlets for this, TWS will do a banner but lots of other groups are joining in too and will have their own banners too.
85. 26<sup>th</sup> October Craft Day, draw up a memo of understanding of the domestic violence act. Run a session using why, who, where, when questions to draw out what women want to see with regards to this act and what they want, that can then be put in a memo and given to the police. I am allocated with this task.
86. Circulate minutes at next meeting
87. Trainee 2's absence. Gemma explains that she hasn't seen her for a long time. Vicky understands that she has been offered a job with (organisation X). Trainee 2 is the bread winner for the family as her parents are both unemployed. Vicky understands the pressure that Trainee 2 is under but that if she is not committed then it would be better to know about it now, though she realises why she wants to take a paid job in addition to training with TWC to be a development practitioner. Vicky recalls a time where they all had to say one thing about themselves and Trainee 2 said that she wanted to be an interior designer. Vicky elaborated on the problem of people dropping out and that TWC loses capacity a lot as people take opportunities that come their way, especially if it means a higher income. The work with (organisation X) is only short term though and Vicky expresses concern over what she will do then.
88. Gemma's robbery is raised. She explains in Afrikaans what happened. Vicky asks if she feels o.k to continue going to Delft. Vicky says yes but that the group is too big. Vicky is glad that she has raised that point and says that she must not continue on her own. Gemma refers to Trainee 2's absence and that she had to do the workshop on her own last time. Vicky says that she has been in touch with the Knowledge Co-op at UCT and in contact with a student who can help them with marketing. Vicky says that there is too much time spent on painting and that the women should be doing crafts that they can sell, which the marketing student can help with. This then creates revenue. Gemma says that the people at (location b) complain that the beads they are given are too small. Vicky says that she needs to look at the group that you have. Take some magazines and

choose things to make to sell so that the women have something to gain. All the paintings are just sat there. Vicky also advises that volunteers that help her with the workshop need nurturing and welcoming and that this may be why the previous volunteer before Trainee 2 didn't stay.

89. Vicky says that it is very important that reports are given to her. She asks (trainee 1) about the session plan and why she wasn't told that they ran their first session without one. (trainee 1) explains that (trainee 3) had it and they had planned the session but couldn't use it because (trainee 3) had it and wasn't there. Vicky reinforces the importance of taking registers and ensuring that they are given to her along with reports each month.
90. Vicky asks Gemma about her reports and that all the issues that she is having should be put in the report to her each month so she knows of the problems that are happening and is up to date with what's going on. She also mentions a problem with keys. Vicky says that the reports are essential in order to motivate and ensure money from donors.
91. Vicky says that she has attended a meeting about fundraising and has a list of possible donors that she wants to follow up. She is thinking about money to pay (trainee 1) when she finishes her learnership and needs a paid job.
92. Vicky says that she wants to make sure that the ethnic beading workshop continues to run each month and then whatever they make they can sell.
93. A report is passed to Vicky that she sifts through. There are registers, annotated meeting agendas and papers headed with the logo from the Learners Network, Department of Social Development. Vicky indicates that this is the sort of thing she needs each month.
94. Returning to the matter of a volunteer to go with Gemma to (location b), (practitioner x) is mentioned who's mum is the chairperson of Cosatu. Vicky says that she would be a good candidate, though all volunteers need to be trained first.
95. Session plans are raised again and Vicky says that Gemma is not to return to (location b) without a session plan. She makes a point of asking Nancy to minute this.
96. Vicky says that they need to come up with a plan of activities for the people from (organisation Q) who visit every year.

97. Discussion about conflict where individuals who have started off a group, then do not receive the credit for it as others come in and take over once TWC groups are established and organised. They talk about (practitioner y) and (practitioner z). Nancy says that (practitioner z) is using the money that is in someone else's name to pay for volunteers to help maintain the garden. She says that (practitioner z) has put all his belongings in the office and now there is no room for (practitioner w). Vicky said that she thought that (practitioner w) was still taking a wage as perhaps acting as if she didn't know anything about the money that (practitioner z) has. Vicky recalled a time when out of a R25,000 budget she demanded a R9,000 salary for herself. After her house burned down, people donated new doors and windows, which she sold to pay for a trip to the Eastern Cape. Vicky and Nancy made the point that it wasn't so much the money but the fact that she had been dishonest about it. Nancy said that there was a lot of politics to it. She also said that she knew her sister who was positive (ref to HIV) was very ill and that she would have to go back to the Eastern cape to look after her.
98. No session next week because it's 'all pay' (The Delft community get their benefit cheque from the government so don't bother going to the community centre because they have money to buy food).
99. Vicky mentions a couple who are wanting to donate food at the end of each month, so we should keep an eye out for where the best place might be for them to do this. They want to give the food to the people themselves rather than give it to someone else to give.
100. They talk again about the training session from the previous week and they comment on the language that the trainers use. Vicky looks at the notes that Nancy gives her and reads out some of the terms that they use and laugh. Nancy recalls a time where she was observed and was criticised about going to a community where people only spoke Afrikaans. She said that it hadn't been a problem and it was only that one particular day, when she was stressed because her husband was ill, and her mind went completely blank. 'I don't know what I did but I did!' they agree that the REFLECT trainers talk about the theory but forget what it is actually like to run a session with a women's circle and are too theoretical rather than practical.
101. Vicky comments that she likes the way I have dressed and that I fit in. She says that she dresses very simply too so that people don't realise she is in a senior position and so she sees things how they really are.



102. Vicky said that there was something that I wanted to ask. I said that I wanted to carry out research into their experiences of being a development practitioner. I said I didn't want to judge them or the way that they carried out workshop; I was more interested in their stories and their life histories. I said that I didn't just want to take and research and leave, I wanted them to gain in some way too. I said I couldn't think of anything that I had to offer that they wanted but that it was something for them to think about and consider. I added that interviewing may be time consuming and that each interview could take an hour or two, so they needed to decide three things. Firstly, did they want to take part, secondly, were they prepared to give up the time and thirdly, what would they want from me in return. I described my skills, that I could teach, I could type things up for them, help them with applications or paperwork. I added that I would be happy to do anything from looking after children to cooking or cleaning for them. I don't know how seriously they took this but I was being genuine. Vicky elaborated making reference to a previous researcher who had spoken to them. They remembered and said aah, like I tell you my story and you tell me yours. I said I could do that, but was happy to give them something in return that was more useful to them than hearing my life history. I said that they could think about it and let me know in our meeting next week.
103. Vicky says that even if it costs more money, we must make sure that we take the safest route to (location b). The only reason that there has been an issue before is where people have claimed for travel expenses adding on R10 to the actual cost of the journey. But if we need to take a longer way around to avoid having to cross a dangerous quiet field then she would pay the extra travel expenses. We were not to put our lives in danger.
104. Nancy comments that someone complained that the people from the REFLECT course were unfriendly and that the trainers had complained about the venue. Vicky pointed out that SARN hadn't been prepared to pay for a venue so had used the community centre free of charge so they shouldn't complain.
105. Gemma says that when she went to the Police station in (location x) to report her mugging, they told her to go back to Delft and report it to the station there, even though this meant returning to where the crime had happened. She said that people had seen but not offered her any help, merely returned to their houses.

106. Vicky talks about how she would react in the same situation and that she would tell them to shoot her then she is not giving them anything. Or she would hit them. She says that robbers don't expect you to fight back. She says that she is very aware of her surroundings and describes a methodical system of checking as she walks to different places to assess the relative potential dangers in various directions. She draws on experiences from when she was homeless and on the street for four to five years. She explains at night she walks in the middle of the street not on the pavement to give herself more room and more thinking time if she needs to run. Nancy agrees and says that she does a similar thing when she gets off a taxi bus. She takes off her earrings. Vicky says that it's a lot to do with body language and how you carry yourself.
107. We agree to meet the following Monday to do a session plan when the community centre is quiet and we have the whole place to ourselves. Vicky announces that the meeting is over and we all put our notebooks away.

(Lines 108 – 115 have been omitted due to content being about the personal lives of the women, which are unrelated to The Women's Circle)

115. We agree to meet at 11am on Monday to go over session planning, baselines and planning for the 16 days of activism.

### **Questions arising from contact today**

116. How do these women juggle work as a development practitioners with demands of home?
117. How do they view the role of the donor agency (SARN).
118. Why do these women continue to do the work they do when it is so poorly paid? (R750 a month?)
119. What difference do they feel they make to women's lives?
120. How do they cope with the emotion work of development in addition to their own personal baggage?
121. What stories do these women have from people in communities and what impact do these stories have on their lives?
120. How do these women support each other?

**On the way to the bus stop**

121. I walk with Nancy and (Trainee 1) and Nancy mentions that in Philippe, scollies jump out of the trees to rob you. They give me advice about which bus to catch.

University of Cape Town

### **Appendix III: Interview schedule and rationale**

Having already established a relationship with the interviewees over the last few months, I did not use any questions to break the ice or build rapport but I will begin with an easy question, which takes them back to when they first became involved in The Women's Circle. I will try and keep the questions in chronological order.

#### **Question 1**

**Can you tell me the story of how you came to be a practitioner with The Women's Circle?**

(Probes: Why? When? How has your relationship with TWC evolved over time?)

This question serves to focus the interviewee on the realm of The Women's Circle rather than any other groups that they may be involved in. It may not directly answer my research questions, but I may be doing the interview having not seen the ladies for over a month, and want to ease them into the interview gently.

#### **Question 2**

**I would like you to think back to a meeting that we had with Asura, when she would not sit down at the table with us for the meeting. What are your thoughts about her decision to stand rather than sit?**

(Probes: She said that if she sat it would take away her power, what do you think she meant by this? Take care to steer the conversation so that it doesn't become a rant about Asura.)

By asking the interviewee to recall a memorable moment (to me at least) that all of us shared, it provides a shared starting point from which to explore

- a) different theories of power
- b) interactions between development practitioners

This has the potential to link to sub questions 1 and 2 depending on what discussion follows. I hope to compare each interviewee's interpretation of Asura's behaviour and code for the following themes:

- a) Feminist discourse
- b) Hegemonic discourse
- c) Theories of power
- d) Enablement/constraint

Between writing my interview questions and interviewing, one of the practitioners has left TWC and Asura has been made TWC co-ordinator for Delft and has attended an additional meeting in January 2012. I have reflected on whether it is morally right to ask a question about someone that has become more heavily involved, as it could be perceived as stirring relationships. For example, if one of them tells Asura that I am asking questions about her, she may become upset or offended.

However, the alternative is not knowing and that may indicate that I have lost a sense of objectivity that is necessary to ask questions that are going to best answer my research question. I have decided to include it for two reasons:

1. It is the only point of reference that overtly involves power with an outsider where all of the practitioners and myself were present, providing a shared point of reference.
2. I am not asking them to mock or criticise Asura, the question asks them for their thoughts. If they don't want to answer this question I will replace it with the following:

**Question 2a.**

**I would like you to think back to a workshop in Delft when you had prepared a session but attendance was low. What are your thoughts about this?**

Probes:

2a) Who do you think is responsible for participants' attendance. Why do people attend or not attend your workshops? How did it make you feel? What did you say about it to other facilitators?

By asking the interviewee to recall a memorable moment that all of us have shared, it provides a starting point from which to explore

- a) different theories of power
- b) interactions between development practitioners

This has the potential to link to sub questions 1 and 2 depending on what discussion follows. I hope to compare each interviewee's interpretation of participants' behaviour and code for the following themes;

- a) Feminist discourse
- b) Hegemonic discourse
- c) Theories of power
- d) Enablement/constraint

#### **Question 3 and 4**

In order to begin an investigation into the women's thoughts about power I am starting the interview with an adapted version of an activity advocated by Kaplan (2002, p. 101) called 'Fingering Power.'

**Q.3 In your role in The Women's Circle, can you recall a situation in which you felt very powerful? Please could you share this story with me.**

(Probe for what they did in the situation, what the other person/ people did, what made it easy for them in the behaviour of the powerless, to go on with what they were doing? What did they have to access? What did they have to close themselves off to, to go on?)

**Q.4 In your role in The Women's Circle, can you recall a situation in which you felt very powerless?**

(Probe for what the powerful party did, what did it do to you? What may your share have been in what happened, what did you have to close yourself off to and why?)

Q.3 and Q.4 links to sub questions 1 and 2 as the story that the women tell may reveal assumptions that they make in interactions within TWC that they recognise as being power laden. By asking them explicitly to think about power, I hope to begin to unpack their notions of power is and how it works.

**Question 5.**

**Can you describe a relationship that you have found to be helpful in your job as a women's circle practitioner?**

Probe for dominant groups that they belong to, sources of power, sources of support that help them achieve their aims, interactions that they have found useful such as meetings/ training, money? Any enabling factors or ways of thinking about situations and interactions. (Restrict to relationships within the women's circle)

**Question 6.**

**Can you describe a relationship that that you have found to be unhelpful in your job as a women's circle practitioner?**

Probe for competing dominant organisations, attitudes of others, sources of material or ideological constraints (restrict to relationships within the women's circle).

Questions 5 and 6 are aiming to draw out interactions that are significant. The way they characterise and describe the relationship may shed light on how they construct themselves in relation to others that reveals how they are positioned by discourses. The phrase helpful or unhelpful alludes to enablement and constraint.

## **Appendix IV: Consent Form**

### **An exploration of the journey of research practitioners**

My name is Teresa Perez and I am a Masters student at the University of Cape Town. The research I am conducting is for my Masters thesis for assessment purposes. My Supervisor is Dr Johann Graff at the University of Cape Town.

#### **Background**

The aim of my study is to understand more about what it is like to be a development practitioner in Cape Town. To help me do this I would like to listen to your meetings, attend workshops and speak to you individually.

#### **What will happen during the study?**

I will attend meetings and workshops. At a time and quiet place that suits you, I would like you to talk to me individually for no more than 90 minutes about your views and experiences. I will record our conversation with your permission. If you do not wish to be recorded, I will take notes on what you tell me, but this may mean that it takes more time.

#### **Confidentiality:**

All the information I collect will be kept confidential, that means that only I will have access to the recordings and notes. In the final report, your names will not be used.

#### **Feedback:**

I will provide you with a transcript of our individual conversation to check that you are happy that it is accurate. I can give you a copy of the report on which you may comment if you wish. I will present the results to my supervisor and the Sociology Faculty at UCT for assessment purposes once the project has finished.

#### **Right to refuse:**

You are not under any obligation to participate if you do not want to. You can terminate the conversations that we have at any time and do not have to give a



reason. However I would encourage your participation so you can help me with this study.

**Indication of consent:**

If you are willing to participate, please sign below to indicate that you understand fully what this study is about and agree to be interviewed.

Thank you

Teresa Perez

|           |           |           |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Name      | Name      | Name      | Name      | Name      | Name      |
| Signature | Signature | Signature | Signature | Signature | Signature |
| Date      | Date      | Date      | Date      | Date      | Date      |

## **Appendix V: TWC meeting agenda**

This is an example of an agenda that was distributed at the start of one of the meetings that I attended.

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### **Draft Agenda Staff/ Practitioners Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

- a) Welcome
  - b) Discussion sites of practice
  - c) Planning February
  - a) Workshops
  - b) Community Awareness
  - c) Needs
  - d) Reporting/ Monitoring and Evaluation/ Template Design (Ideas from practitioners)
    - Attendance register
    - Session plan
    - Minutes of workshop
  - e) Research/ funding
  - f) Current budget allocation
  - g) Thanks and closing
-

## **Appendix VI: Extracts from workshop observation field notes**

The following is an account of two workshops that I observed with a brief comparison. For reasons outlined in chapter 3, I was unable to make detailed notes during workshops. This extract has been included to give an idea of what the workshop settings were like and the things that I found noteworthy.

### **Venue 1: Delft, 20th September 2011**

I observed this workshop early on in my time with TWC. I sat on the floor to one side and made notes, though these were limited as I looked after some of the children that people had brought with them that were roaming about.

The workshop was held in (location b) in Delft which is made up of several buildings. TWC workshops here are held in an outside covered over courtyard space outside the kitchen. This workshop was made up of approximately 30 adults though there were several babies and children that people had brought with them. Most of the participants were women apart from two men. There was a mixture of age groups from young women with toddlers to older people. People mostly spoke in Afrikaans between themselves but reverted to English when answering questions posed by the facilitators in front of the group. After a group activity, representatives from each group fed back mostly in English but one lady did hers in Xhosa. I didn't interview the participants but levels of education as indicated by my observation of participation in tasks requiring reading varied greatly, from some people who could not read English to others who had finished the activity and were assisting others. The workshop was held at 10am, which infers the participants are unemployed (supported by Vicky, Line 249) or do not work during the day.

In planning meetings facilitators refer to this workshop as 'Health and Human Rights' and the purpose of the workshop appears to be to establish what human rights are, before beginning a series of workshops on rights to do with health care. The workshop begins with a question and answer session on rights. For example (trainee 1) asks for an example of a right and one woman puts up her hand and says, 'the right not to be raped.' This isn't commented on by (Trainee 1) who moves on to her next question. After the questioning, participants are told to get into groups, given A2 paper and a pen to write down a list of rights

that they think they should have. One person from the group presents these to the rest of the class at the end.

During the group work, my impression was that everyone was getting involved in as much as people were interacting with one another, but this didn't stop a lady, not from TWC, appearing from the kitchen and shouting 'you must participate or you won't get any food' (Line 47, field notes) before walking off. The TWC facilitators and I were taken aback by this impromptu rant. I don't know how often this happens but the issue of food being given on the condition of attending workshops was a dominant theme in interviews and meetings. For example, while waiting for participants to arrive at (location b) on with Nancy and (Trainee 1), I ask about who provides the food. I am told that it is through a charity and also involves the councillor. Nancy says that participants don't know that it's their right to have the food. (Trainee 1) says that it is a violation of their rights and Nancy agrees (Lines 336 and 337, field notes). The assumption that people are only there for the food is reinforced by Vicky and Asura in their interview which I never saw explicitly communicated to workshop participants, but informs their planning.

It is difficult to comment on the extent to which participants are aware of facilitators' perceptions of them but my feeling is that they do not receive many verbal or non-verbal signals to communicate a sense of equality with facilitators. For example, the facilitators stand while the participants sit apart from when they are taking part in activities that require them to stand before returning to their chairs. Facilitators choose participants to speak from those who put up their hands. There is an element of traditional classroom interaction between facilitators and participants (explored in more detail in section 4.5). While I could criticise this workshop for not adhering to the principles of REFLECT, it was mainly facilitated by two trainee practitioners who did not have their session plan with them as it had been left with a third trainee who didn't arrive.

## **Venue 2: Delft, 23rd February 2012**

I observed this workshop towards the end of my 6 months having carried out two interviews. This workshop was facilitated by Asura who I had only met a couple of times and didn't know as well as Vicky, Nancy and Gemma.

This workshop was in (location a) in a dedicated space designed for meetings and workshops, spacious and indoor that was more comfortable than (location b). This workshop was made up of 12 participants with Asura facilitating. I sat on the floor observing. One of the women had brought a toddler with her that I ended up minding for part of the time, which made detailed note taking more difficult. One of the participants was a trainee facilitator who I had observed in the previous workshop. According to the previous meeting, two participants were being mentored by Asura with a view to them becoming facilitators. From the twelve participants there were four men and eight women. The workshop was referred to as a youth focal and therefore all the participants were 35 years old or younger. There was a more even mix of English/Xhosa and English/Afrikaans speakers than compared to the previous workshop. Asura told everyone that the workshops would be English as the common language spoke among them.

The aim of the session seemed to be to outline the rationale behind REFLECT and Asura read out from a manual that she had brought with her explaining about who Paulo Freire was and his work in Brazil. Within this she says that anyone can facilitate and explains the difference between teaching and facilitating. Participants sit in chairs made in to a semi circle by the practitioner and listen. They make notes that Asura writes on the board though most people do not have anything to write with and I lend them some stationary that I happen to have in my bag. The participants did different activities during the session, ending with eating food that had been prepared in a pot. The workshop begins at 1pm and is over by 2pm even though in planning sessions the workshops are said to be 2 hours.

Asura limits the time that anyone can speak for by allocating a person to decide when an individual has been speaking for long enough. During the session, there began conversation between participants about gangsterism in the community, what causes it and how it might be tackled. The men in the group take it in turns to explain their views, with one explaining the problem of parents leaving their children to play outside rather than engaging with them through playing games and reading to them. Part way through his explanation, Asura

looks at the lady who has been nominated to decide when people have spoken for long enough, and after a prompt that I don't hear clearly, the nominated participants tells the speaker that they have spoken for long enough.

### **Comparisons between the two workshops**

Facilitators in the first workshop had stickers with their name on whereas participants didn't and participants were not asked their names or referred to by name. In the second workshop, Asura already knew at least four of the participants and referred to them by name which made the participants seem less like an anonymous group of individuals as compared with the first workshop.

These were significant features in relation to the question of the role of power in interactions because the seeming lack of attention to the physical surrounding meant that there was no conscious effort to break down unequal power dynamics between facilitators and participants. For example, by standing at the front while participants sit facing them implies a traditional classroom arrangement that departs from the theoretical aims of REFLECT (See chapter 1). It could be seen as implying that facilitators are in charge that may constrain the speech of participants. For example the IRE discourse (see section 4.4.) was a feature of workshops, where facilitators posed questions and participants responses were supported or judged as not relevant. This was particularly pronounced in evaluations where participants were asked leading questions like 'that was fun wasn't it' and 'you will be back next week then?'

In another workshop Asura avoids negative responses by changing the question from 'what can you tell me about Paulo Freire' when met with silence, to 'What was the best thing about the workshop today?' This may limit the opportunities for constructive criticism and lends itself to reinforcing current practices rather than evolving practices that meet the demands of individual groups of participants. This also threatens the transformative potential espoused by participatory development initiatives.

From observations and verbal references to workshops in meetings and interviews with practitioners, even though it is quite limited, there seems to be

more of a commitment to equal participation in workshops than in TWC meetings. This is explored further through the work of discourses in section 4.4.

## Appendix VII: Instances of development discourses permeating language

Table to show the frequency of terminology (recorded in field notes and transcripts) that can be associated with a development discourse. Numbers indicate the line number in field notes of transcripts where the word appears.

|    | a)   | b)   | c)                                     | d)                                     | e)                                     | f)                                     | g)  |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|    | Choice of language informed by a development discourse | Example of use in meetings/ sms communication (from field notes)                                 | Instances of use in Vicky's transcript | Instances of use in Nancy's transcript | Instances of use in Gemma's transcript | Instances of use in Asura's transcript | Alternative language that could have been used informed by 'traditional classroom talk' |
| 1  | Workshop   | (Used by me in field notes, not a reflection of practitioners speech)                            | 145, 146, 147, 149, 154,               | 58, 60, 132                            | 185, 186, 197, 245, 255, 293           | 22, 49, 76, 286, 307, 308, 338         | Lesson  |
| 2  | Facilitator  | 153, 163, 209, 358, 614, 627, 829, 925.  | 2. 45, 51, 53, 54,                     | 1, 17, 105, 134,                       | 55, 87, 138, 150, 185, 186             | 338, 351                               | Teacher   |
| 3  | Co-ordinator   | 829, 1036, 298, 309  | 14,                                    | 114                                    | 138, 152                               | 24, 262                                | Mentor  |
| 4  | Participants   | (Used by me in field notes, not a reflection of practitioners speech)                            |  | 102, 110                               | 180, 195                               |  | Students  |
| 5  | Client   |  | 45, 51,                                |  |  |  | Students  |
| 6  | Session plan   | sms from Vanessa 22, 794<br>TWC meetings 68, 80, 86, 98, 190, 424, 442, 482, 527, 553, 979, 1048 |  | 100, 101,                              |  | 236                                    | Lesson plan   |
| 7  | Session planning                                       | 72, 107  |  |  |  |  | Lesson planning   |
| 8  | REFLECT circle/ circle/s                               | 393, 426, 1036   | 15, 96, 102,                           |  | 15, 125, 129, 136, 243, 259, 481       | 37                                     | Class   |
| 9  | REFLECT methodology                                    | 9, 635,  |  |  |  |  | Teaching pedagogy   |
| 10 | Tool   | 150, 214, 221, 272, 496, 606   |  |  |  |  | Activity  |
| 11 | Mapping, tree tool, timeline, matrix                   | 261, 380, 397, 668, 595,   |  |  | 203, 205, 206,                         |  | Game/ learning activity   |
| 12 | Tool kit   | Sms from Vanessa to facilitators: 128, 537, 733  |  |  |  | 58, 325, 326                           | Textbook  |
| 13 | PRA tools  | 600  |  |  |  |  | Inclusive learning strategies   |
| 14 | REFLECT tools  | 10   |  |  |  |  |   |
| 15 | REFLECT  | 17, 43, 56, 68, 69, 91, 95, 220, 223, 390, 393, 496, 528, 627, 635, 736,                         |  | 26                                     | 10, 115, 403, 421,                     | 53, 69, 72, 76                         |   |
| 16 | Equal participation                                    | 150  |  |  |  |  | Inclusive   |
| 17 | REFLECT training/ training/s (refresher course)        | 67, 474, 627, 733  |  |  | 87, 337                                | 327                                    | Continued professional development (CPD)/ teacher training/ In service training.        |
| 18 | Forum / forum meeting                                  | 391, 529, 772  |  |  | 7                                      |  | Governors meeting   |
| 19 | Proposal (funding)                                     | 71, 420, 588, 937, 957   |  |  | 42, 405, 446, 448                      |  |   |
| 20 | Funder/ sponsor  | 250, 937, 938, 946, 957, 1046  |  |  | 439, 57, 26, 41, 63                    | 443                                    |   |



## Appendix VIII: Instances of classroom talk in permeating language

Table to show the frequency of terminology that conforms with traditional classroom talk, recorded in interview transcripts\*

|   | a)   | b)  | c)                                     | d)   | e)   | f)   | g)  |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
|   | Traditional classroom talk that has been used instead of words informed by a development discourse | Example of use in meetings/ sms communication (from field notes)  | Instances of use in Vicky's transcript | Instances of use of traditional classroom talk in Nancy's transcript | Instances of use of traditional classroom talk in Gemma's transcript | Instances of use of traditional classroom talk in Asura's transcript | Choice of language informed by development discourse that could equally have been used. |
| 1 | Class/ Classes   | (Not analysed because the field notes are written in my words rather than direct quotes from practitioners) | -                                      | 111, 114, 114, 115, 123, 163   | 84, 191, 202, 265, 289   | 50   | Workshop  |
| 2 | Teach  |   | -                                      | 152  | 140  | 317  | Train/ facilitate   |
| 3 | Learner  |   | -                                      | -  | 265  | -  | Participants  |
| 4 | Rules  |   | -                                      | -  | 316, 317,  | -  | Policy  |

\*I have only chosen words where another phrase would still have made sense in the context in which it was spoken.

## Appendix IX: Role allocation in meetings

Table to show the roles and responsibilities that are allocated in meetings and evidence of individuals being positions by a 'pupil control discourse.'

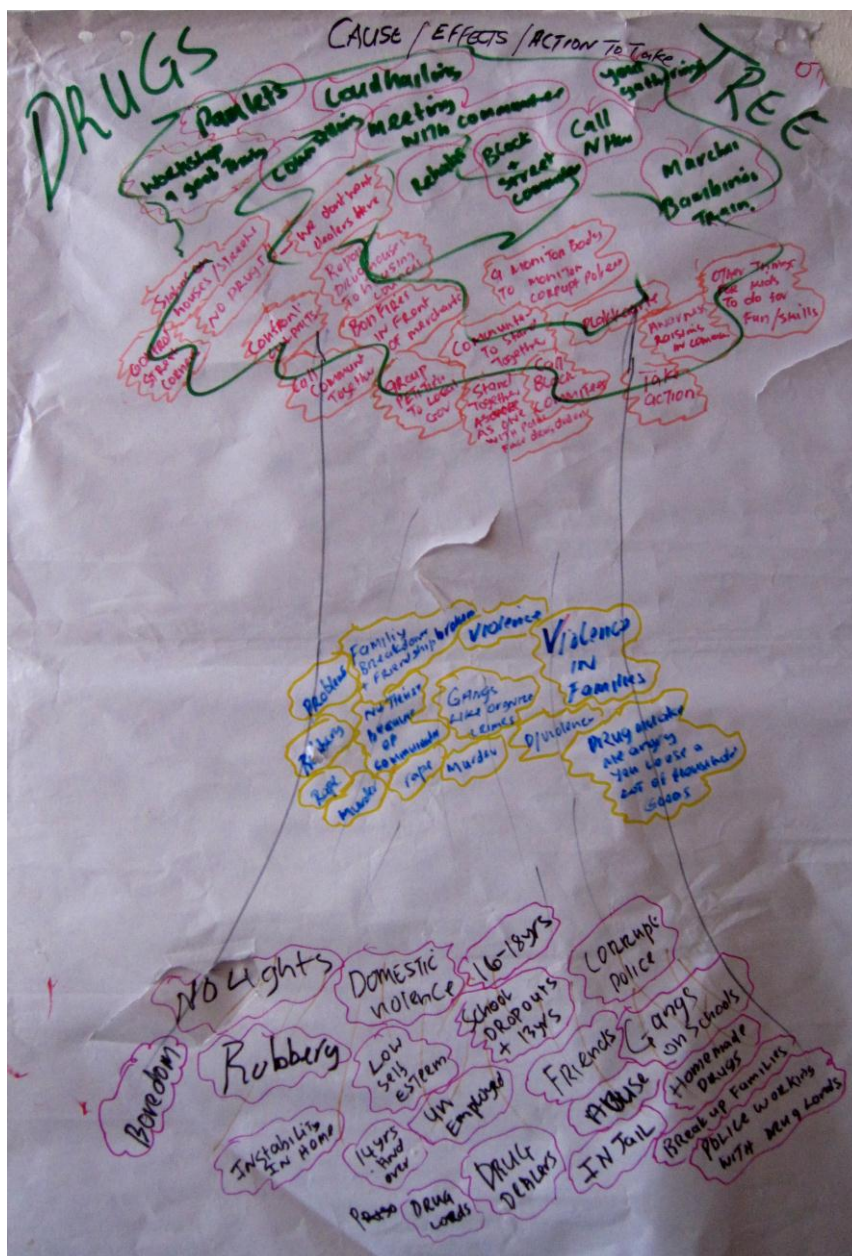
| a)<br>Name | b)<br>Roles occupied in meetings | c)<br>Parallel with Pupil Control Discourse | d)<br>Position in TWC   | e)<br>Acts performed that I observed in all of the 13 meetings   |
|------------|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Vicky      | Chairperson                      | Teacher                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TWC Programme manager</li> <li>• Practitioner</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agenda setting</li> <li>- To direct and steer conversation</li> <li>- Taking notes</li> <li>- Disseminate information</li> <li>- To make sure everyone signs the register</li> </ul>                      |
| Nancy      | TWC member                       | Pupil                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor to trainee facilitators</li> <li>• Practitioner</li> <li>• Co-ordinator of Crafts</li> <li>• Co-ordinator of gardening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking meeting minutes up until October 2011*</li> <li>- Taking notes</li> <li>- Answering questions posed by the chair</li> <li>- Read and safely file information</li> <li>- Sign register</li> </ul>   |
| Gemma      | TWC member                       | Pupil                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinator of Crafts</li> <li>• Practitioner</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking notes</li> <li>- Answering questions posed by the chair</li> <li>- Read and safely file information</li> <li>- Sign register</li> </ul>  |
| Asura      | TWC member                       | Pupil                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordinator in Delft</li> <li>• Practitioner</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking notes</li> <li>- Answering questions posed by the chair</li> <li>- Read and safely file information</li> <li>- Sign register</li> </ul>  |
| Teresa     | TWC member                       | Pupil                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's circle volunteer</li> <li>• Practitioner</li> <li>• Researcher</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking meeting minutes up from October 2011 and emailing them to Vicky*</li> <li>- Answering questions posed by the chair</li> <li>- Read and safely file information</li> <li>- Sign register</li> </ul> |

\* denotes acts that are explicitly directed by the Chairperson

## Appendix X: The 'tree tool'

A photo of the 'tree tool' being used in a workshop.

The 'tree tool' is an activity used in workshops to discuss a particular question or problem. In this picture the problem has been identified as drugs. The issue is explored and workshop participants' responses are written on flip chart paper in the shape of a tree. Comments made are categorised as causes and written where the roots would be, effects are written on the trunk and actions to take are the leaves. (The Women's Circle, 2010)



## Appendix XI: Field note extracts

Selected field notes showing examples of questions posed by the chairperson,  
over the course of 90 minutes in a meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011

We want to start a youth desk in Delft and Elsie's River. So the question would be, what would youth want from a youth desk? Would you also say that would be the question, what services would be offered? (field notes, line 592).

Vicky suggests what the next question will be and we agree. She says I don't want you to just agree (field notes, line 596).

Vicky starts talking about Thursday. So what kind of service have you indicated that you need from a youth desk. Should that be the question? Gemma asks for her to repeat the question in Afrikaans. Vicky tells her in Afrikaans (field notes, line 658).

So would the issue on the trunk be, what is our current situation? I don't want you to just agree with me because this is important. I want them to think about their current situation (field notes, line 660).

The question still is how do we ask the question. Or would it be what are the challenges faced by youth? And why has this happened? (field notes, line 666).

I need you to pick my brain on this. When you see all the negatives you have to draw out the positives. What can be done to help you? To address all of these little things to assist you in your growth. I am still stuck. But maybe one shouldn't be looking at the negatives (field notes, line 678).

So if I ask you what are the challenges that you are facing. Nancy does that make sense to you? I am going to ask you one at a time. What are the challenges that you as youth face? (field notes, line 688).

So what are the challenges faced. You must help me, I am trying to phrase this question (field notes, line 691).

So is the question going to be what are the challenges you are facing? All the youth are facing the same issues, it may differ on a personal level, but we want the broader picture. What are the challenges you as youth face? (field notes, line 707).

## Appendix XII: Instances of a Western feminist discourse permeating language

Table to show examples from transcripts where language implies a focus on 'needs' and 'problems' (Western feminist discourse)\*

|   | a)  | b)  | c)   | d)  | e)   | f)   | g)   | h)                                     |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|
|   | Choice of language informed by a 'Western feminist discourse' | Instances of use in Vicky's transcript  | Alternative phrasing using the language of choice  | Instances of use in Gemma's transcript  | Alternative phrasing using the language of choice  | Instances of use in Asura's transcript   | Alternative phrasing using the language of choice  | Instances of use in Nancy's transcript |
| 1 | Needs   | <p>But where you think of where Susan comes from and, and in her own space, one would um, sort of understand that maybe that is the way of, she needs to assert herself in a certain way (22)</p> <p>And then um, it's the power of expression and then also I think those um, in management, in positions. We should not always assume that the person has the power, um to ask the question that they feel they need to ask. (42)</p> | <p>...she chooses to assert herself...</p> <p>...to ask the question that they are choosing to ask...</p>        | <p>So it's, it is what I can say man, other co-ordinators said, Vicky close lots of doors, and that people did need that facilitating, there was need that craft, everything (162)</p> <p>Ja. She can handle, she can handle, she can handle Delft. Delft is too big. She (Asura) needs lots of help in Delft (308)</p> | <p>...people chose be facilitators...</p> <p>...people chose to attend craft workshops...</p> <p>...she chooses to co-ordinate Delft without any help...</p> | <p>Nobody knows what goes on in a person's house. Its you yourself that need to go out, motivate yourself, but at the end of the day you still need to go and give, (54)</p> | <p>...you yourself that makes the choice to go out...</p> <p>...but at the end of the day you choose to go and give...</p> | -                                      |
| 2 | Problems  | <p>So and that for me was always problematic, because um, I know what it is, when you break that trust in the community. You have to, whatever you promise you need to, even though you cannot do it, 100%, but you have to do it to the best of your ability (141).</p>  | <p>...so and that for me was always a choice...</p> <p>...whatever you promise, you must make a choice to...</p> | <p>It's <i>her</i> (Vicky) problem not our problem (489)</p> <p>That was the problem. They was getting paid all the time and then just like that, they didn't get paid anymore, and so they dropped the circles (136)</p>   | <p>...It's her choice...</p> <p>...that was the choice they made...</p>  | <p>The young ones will be there until they got what they want, they will move out, we still sit with the same problem (61)</p>   | <p>...we still sit with the same choices...</p>  | -                                      |
| 3 | Choices   | -   |  | -   |  | -  |  | -                                      |

\* I have only selected sentences where 'needs' and 'problems' could have been framed using the language of 'choice.'

### Appendix XIII: Instances of economic development permeating language

Choice of language informed by an assumption that development is synonymous with economic development in interviews.

| a)   | b)                                     | c)  | d)   | e)  |
|--|--|---|--|---|
|  | Instances of use in Vicky's transcript | Instances of use in Nancy's transcript  | Instances of use in Gemma's transcript   | Instances of use in Asura's transcript  |
| Choice of language informed by an assumption that development is synonymous with economic development or economic progress | -                                      | <p>So I'm glad I joined the women's circle because really I've gained experience, and I've gained a lot of skill, you know, so now even at home <b>I can do my beads and sell and have something to put on the table for my kids</b> (136)</p> <p>So that is why I am saying to them <b>I am bringing you a skill for you to have money</b> (158)</p> | <p>They were desperate because it was like a piece of bread for them. <b>They can make it and they can sell it. It's like a piece of bread you can put on the table.</b> (163)</p> <p>I'm very glad, <b>because this skill is what we're doing is to learn people, unemploy, unemployed people to learn people that they can put food on the table.</b> (339)</p> <p>And that's why I'm glad I can learn people and I can learn myself and I can learn them to do something and <b>they can sell it and they can get food on my table for my children.</b> (340)</p> | <p>A: <b>You can motivate the youth, yes, but motivate to go out and do a job.</b> They not going to stay in the circle. (67)</p> |

## Appendix XIV: Instances of the homogeneity of women permeating language

Table to show examples from transcripts where language implies women to be a homogenous group (Western feminist discourse)

| a)   | b)  | c)  | d)  | e)  |
|--|---|---|---|---|
|  | Instances of use in Vicky's transcript  | Instances of use in Nancy's transcript  | Instances of use in Gemma's transcript  | Instances of use in Asura's transcript  |
| <p><b>Statements underpinned by an assumption of homogeneity/ sameness/ commonality/ coherent group.</b></p> <p><b>For example phrases with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'they...'</li> <li>- 'women are...'</li> <li>- 'most of the people will...'</li> <li>- especially in Delft...</li> <li>- 'we are all the same...'</li> </ul> | <p>the clients that we deliver a service to, um sometimes we assume that people understand and with that assumption we make statements that <b>they don't want to learn, or they are not interested.</b> (45)</p> <p>So because I have the experience, because <b>I have experience of what each woman is experiencing</b> and still experiencing. I understand the relevance, I understand what is relevant. What is important to me today? (74)</p> <p>And that is not realistic because one are asking <b>women that are carrying a heavy load on their shoulders in terms of meeting their obligations towards family, grand children.</b> (97)</p> <p>V: No <b>they go for the sandwich and the cup of tea</b>, because if I'm hungry I'll sit there for an hour or whatever. And if I'm going to get tea and lunch and afternoon tea, of course I'm going to sit there, I have no food in my house. (155)</p> | <p>N: ah, <b>most of the people will listen to you</b> and, and I think at the back of their minds they are having questions 'Oh, what am I going to ask her?' and 'How?' and you have that, you also have that, are anxious to, to, for them, for them to react on what you are saying. So that gives you power, at least you know that 'oh o.k. people are listening to me and they understand what I am talking about' So you have that power. (75)</p> <p>And also when it's all pay, more <b>especially in Delft</b> because the, the thing is the, the people for the all pay are there at the library, so people just go there and went home. (116)</p> <p>You know, <b>people in our communities they don't want to come to these things because they want money.</b> (138)</p> <p>When you come to them saying let's be a group and do these beads, <b>they will think you have money</b> (139)</p> <p><b>So that is why I am able to speak to them and tell them what happened to me so that it can happen to them</b> (145)</p> <p>Some think you undermine them, you know they have that thing, that stigma thing, yet you are not undermining them I am just telling '<b>we are all the same</b>, I was like you, I am not educated more than you, if you can come and join us at The Women's Circle you can be like me' (147)</p> | <p><b>'They were desperate</b> because it was like a piece of bread for them. They can make it and they can sell it. It's like a piece of bread you can put on the table.' (163)</p> <p>'In the first time we had workshops, <b>lots of people attend, because, they were had something to eat and they get travelling allowance</b> and everything.' (173)</p> <p>G: They tell me, they tell me, they tell me, they put their names on, what happening, it's their community, <b>they knows about that community</b> (212)</p> | <p>A: you can bring in whoever you wanna, this is Delft, <b>if they don't get food or things at the workshop, they will never be able to run workshops here.</b> (48)</p> <p>At the end of the sessions I call in different departments and the CPF and the Social Development. I call them in to answer questions from the people <b>because they are the professionals.</b> (236)</p> |